

**ALL CHANGE!**



# **ALL CHANGE!**

**The Secret Art of Transformation,  
Perfect Project and Change Management**

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**Eddie Obeng**

**MBA | PhD | FAPM**

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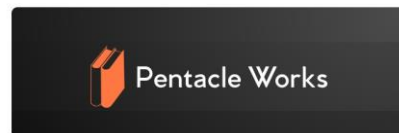
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## NEW WORLD PARADIGM

“We spend our time responding rationally to a world which we understand and recognise, but which no longer exists.”

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**Eddie Obeng**

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## ABOUT YOU

Thank you for picking up this book.

You may be one of the hundreds of thousands familiar with the first best-selling edition, taking a peek to see ‘What’s new?’. You may have chanced upon it or received it from a friend with a recommendation.

Either way, I’m glad you are here.

You probably hope for a great outcome and fear it will be just another book!

Whatever your role or interest in ‘Change’, I wrote this for you. This book will be relevant whether you’re planning a wedding, building a nuclear power plant, changing a corporate culture, restoring society, or developing software apps.

The roller coaster adventure novel **All Change!** is for you and for everyone. You meet the enigmatic Franck. You’ll love the Socratic dialogue. This section provides the insights and foundations for what comes later.

You novices will love **The Project Leader’s Secret Handbook** for being non-threatening. You functional and change managers will love new ways to make your day job delivery easier. You professional project managers will thrill at the holistic approach and rush out to apply the soft, human skills you learn.

You experienced project and program managers will find what you’ve been looking for in **Delivering ZERO-defect Perfect Projects**. You will proudly raise your game and place yourself shining, at the leading edge.

You C-suiters, executives, business owners, entrepreneurs, and program directors will exclaim in joy, “At last!”, as you discover the secrets to **The Art of Transformation**.

You wonder, ‘Will I benefit from the whole book?’. Yes! You’ll gain from standing in the shoes of all your stakeholders. You can share the book widely, then everyone can ‘speak’ the same language and join you in the same behaviours and tools.

You’ll find the book spills out beyond its covers to web-**QwikGuides** and the incredible **QUBE** virtual campus. It’s going to be great!

---

## DEDICATION AND THANKS

This book is dedicated to my mother, Dr. Letitia Eva Obeng. She gave me space and encouragement to deliver my first 'big' project (the go-cart shown overleaf) created from a single technical drawing, torn out of a comic annual.

She taught me the resilience to succeed. Her mantra: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!" At my 'outdooring', she arranged for the inventive, musical genius, Mr. Amu, to instruct me, "You must know what is what and what it is intended for. This is a door. This is a window. If you can't get in through the door, get in through the window!" She taught me far too many great values to list.

This Second Edition is also dedicated to my wife, and best friend, business partner, and rock, Susan, without whom you wouldn't be reading this.

Thanks to my good friend Jonathan Norman, who read many iterations of the manuscript and provided the appropriate poke now and then.

Thanks also to The Core Team at Pentacle: David Lomas, Tammy Watchorn, Susan Ross and all at Pentacle.

Without the clients (who brought the problems I was forced to solve by innovating new approaches), the customers (who applied the learning and demonstrated value), the participants in my classes and workshops (who proved instant results) and the happy quibots on the QUBE campus, whose courage to 'do differently', I could not have written this 'encyclopaedia' of change and transformation.

And thanks to project managers Jo Stanford, Andrew Sharpe, Andrew Smith, Elisabetta Galli, Anna Barlow, Jo Box, John Leader, Thierry Bonetto, and many others whose real-life stories inspired the fiction in the book and gave me energy, and I hope that this book will give them a little bit more wind beneath their wings.

*Eddie Obeng*

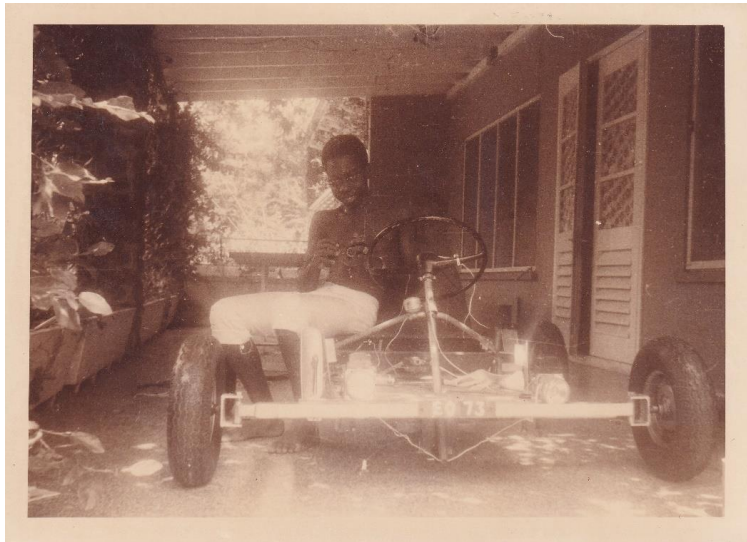
**To life and your freedom & autonomy to shape it as you will!**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

‘Stay in your lane’ is a phrase used to dissuade people from straying from their area of expertise but when it comes to Prof. Eddie Obeng, it's probably a bit late. Eddie travels many lanes at the same time.

He's the author of ten books, including two international Financial Times bestsellers, *All Change!* and *Making Re-engineering Happen*.



Eddie is Learning Director of Pentacle The Virtual Business School (founded 1994) and a Visiting Professor in Entrepreneurship & Innovation at Henley Business School, Reading University. He was previously an Executive Director at Ashridge Management College – Hult, having begun his career with Shell, where he filed innovative patents for offshore gas treatment systems using microorganisms.

As a design engineer in energy conservation, his design for Unilever won an award for ‘Most Energy Efficient Factory in Europe’.

He has revolutionized thinking and practice in many areas of business and organisation management arising from his insightful concept of the New World After Midnight, delightfully and succinctly explained in his 2012 TED Global talk.

His Sunday Times article, Nov 1990, '*Project Managers can show the way*' sparked the naissance of today's project management professionalism. He holds the Sir Monty Finiston Life-time Achievement Award for his contributions to Project Management.



*'Our resident guru'* Project Manager Today

Today the UK Government uses his Innovation models for allocating funds for national innovation investment. Many of the FT100 use his novel OrganoWeb for flexible organisation design. Working with Colin Burns and Tim Brown at IDEO and on the UK Design Council., he re-energised Design Thinking.



How do you facilitate participants to **Learn and Apply** new skills and concepts for impressive business results; despite being globally separated from tutors and each other? And how do you do that collaboratively and in real time? You use QUBE.

As a digital pioneer, Eddie created the QUBE super-functional, virtual campus in 2010.

*'Unusual as an academic to back his ideas with his own money'* **The Sunday Times**

QUBE has been described:

*'QUBE, The most human-centred virtual campus for teaching global executives'*

**Wall Street Journal**

*'QUBE, an innovative virtual world from Pentacle the Virtual Business School'*

**Financial Times**

*'QUBE is an environment that creates a fuller sense of shared experience, spontaneous human interaction, and thus relationship building'*

**The Economist**

Asked what his secret is, he says he was lucky enough to meet giants upon whose shoulders he stands today: Eli Goldratt (Critical Thinking), Simon Gulliford (Teaching Excellence), John Franck (Everyday Economics), Prof Keith Still (Virtual Worlds).



Also, he says, he is the 1 in 300 tribe member whose job it is to eat the strange looking new fruits to see if they are safe for consumption by all. And he relishes exploring and thinking where no one else has thought before. His motto is ***Sine Timore***, and his slogans are: *"Onwards and upwards"* and *"One (sticky) step at a time!"*

*'A 'leading revolutionary' – 'An agent provocateur'* **Financial Times**

He explains that his education in Chemical Engineering, Biotechnology, International Marketing and Economics and decades of teaching and interacting with hundreds of thousands of people make it easy for him to make sense of almost all of today's complexity and to see a simple way through it all.

Oh! and when travelling to clients for work, he flies a helicopter, G-KUBE!

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<sup>1</sup> PETS - People Engagement Tools | Performance Enhancement Tools | Possibility Explanation Tools

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## PROLOGUE

By the time this edition is published, it may be obsolete. Sorry!

During the 2020 UK lockdowns, I began this edition, secure in the knowledge that, after the hiatus, normality would return. There would be a clamouring for better ways to manage and deliver change and transformation.

I was so wrong.

By now, you will have noticed that the single medical emergency has morphed into a never-ending series of crises and demands on you to support wars and climate emergencies, stop 'hate-speech' and let kids choose their bodies.

You will have noticed the steady disappearance of cash as legal tender as high street banks close. You will have seen the introduction of programmable cryptocurrencies and the ability of governments to freeze private accounts.

You will have seen a huge, inexplicable rise in the costs of energy (despite the cost of a barrel of Brent crude, as I write this, being less than two-thirds of what it was at the 2008 peak!).

You will have seen food prices soar as farmers are prevented from using chemical fertilizers after years of government regulation and price pressures that have clamped down on organic alternatives. Farming land is seized and livestock killed.

Travelling for work or holidays has become expensive, unpredictable and difficult to the point of painfulness as your car drops into yet another pothole.

And you would have seen a terrifying raft of legislation. Legislation preventing protests, insisting on digital controls monitoring social media. You may have noticed global treaties that take control of your sovereignty alongside demands for only a single truth to be told.

Everywhere you turn, you'll be offered solutions that promise to make you safer or to be more convenient, or to save the planet. You may have noticed that there's never a connection between the solution and the problem it is purported to solve. SEL, ESG, DIE, and many other three-letter acronyms are now familiar.

You'll meet many people and organisations who will claim that they want to "make the world a better place." You'll feel reassured - until you take the time to think about what they are proposing. The truth is you **can't** "make the world a better place" because **the world (stakeholders, human and non-human) defines what "a better place" is**. And YOU don't know what the world wants. If you think you do, that makes you a narcissist. If you know you don't know but do it anyway, you're a psychopath!

If you comply, you won't notice your loss of freedom. Think of Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*

“...you never realise that you are chained to a wall until you stand to try to walk away.” If you’re seated, those tugging at their social-credit metrics-based chains look crazy. They are frustrated with you.

Inflation-driving quantitative easing, and inability to control global monopolies, and the fall in buying power as fiat cash is inflated will mean the decline of the middle class and the stifling of entrepreneurship.

Here I am, writing about **ethical** change. Change where you engage **stakeholders** and take their views into consideration. Here I am writing about how projects and change **create value**. **My work assumes that participants have autonomy and choice.**

I have spoken<sup>2</sup> and written about our new world, where the **pace of change** outstrips our **ability to learn**, the **size of digital cyberspace** outstrips our **ability to use information**, and the **connection and inputs** of influencers outstrip our **ability to recognise patterns**.

This challenge has been with us for a while, so it took only a little push to shift the whole world to see the chaos of the **world after midnight**. As some became fearful, reaching for an adult voice or a trusted media source for answers, others saw the opportunity.

‘Never waste a crisis’ is now a call to action.

Alongside the camouflage of the fog of war, they are assisted by amazing advancements in persuasion science and artificial intelligence. I remember being impressed and excited when in my country, the UK, the government formed

a ‘Nudge’ unit to help the increase in organ donation and to help people fight obesity. But I should have known better. After all, I named my business ‘Pentacle’ which is ‘a symbol of perfect knowledge that can be used for good or evil’. In movies, you’ll have seen pentacles used to conjure up or banish demons.

Now, using big data and AI to amplify the power of persuasion, real-life bad actors can cause delusions, hypnotise at scale, and even produce fear-induced mass formation psychosis.

**I see coercive, imposed change carried out fast, on a massive scale, with NO ethical brakes!**

Powerful people see an opportunity for land grabs and wealth transfer. Rival nations have used it to sow discord and undermine smooth functioning. Psychopaths and criminals are able to experiment. Clubs of OCD elites can fulfill their dream of a one-world government with you and I as meaningless as termites, assigned our life roles, augmented and controlled by technology.

If I’m right, those standing will cheer. Those of you who’ve gone-with-the-flow and not paid attention to the anomalies, will dismiss this prologue as the rantings of a deluded soul and pray the book you’ve bought is of more value.

***Let’s hope I’m wrong because if I’m right, I’d have written a brilliant book about the subtle arts of change, project management and transformation for a world we recognise and understand but that no longer exists!***

**Eddie OBENG**  
**Burke Lodge | March 2024**

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<sup>2</sup> TED Talk: 12 Minutes [EddieObeng.com/TED](https://www.ted.com/talks/eddie-obeng)  
*New Rules for the New World* 978-1900961158



**ALL CHANGE!**

**Book One:**

# **The Novel:** **All Change!**

## CHAPTER 0: FULLER CIRCLE

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### **IMPORTANT: How to Use This Book**

As you read this book, put what you learn into practice **IMMEDIATELY**.

Do NOT store it up to return to or gloss over; let the book make your change, your project, and even your life better straight away!

There are helpful Possibility Exploration Tools (**PETs**) throughout – Don't feel inhibited to fill them in as you go. – We use Sticky Notes instead of writing directly in the book.

### **ALWAYS WRITE IN SENTENCES**

If you are on QUBE ask for an **All Change! qubicle** to be added to your campus.

Use virtual Sticky Notes .

If you are new to QUBE, you can lease an **All Change! qubicle** for yourself and up to ten colleagues, for three months from <https://QUBE.cc/AllChangeInAction>

If you only have the book, go and get hold of a pack of small stickies sized 38mm x 51mm or smaller **BEFORE** you begin.



Use the QR codes to find **QwikGuides** that explain **When** you would use the PET and **How** to use it in detail. Be sure to bookmark your favourites in your browser!

I have been here before. Well, not exactly in this particular location, but in exactly this situation before. It's Monday. It's lockdown. It's very, very hot, and I have nothing to do but sit in the shade of a large red and yellow umbrella and try to understand what challenges this new world brings. This time, it's Beaconsfield. The last time, it was La Garde Frienet, the French village in the hills above St. Tropez, where I ruined a perfectly good holiday by writing the best-selling first edition of All Change!

The idea behind *All Change!* is that the story is written with pauses and descriptions of scenery, using Socratic dialogue to introduce concepts. You explore complex issues at a pace where **your** learning reflection is built in. The story section provides place holders for what you learn so you can hold onto and recall the points for the long term.

The short story vignettes then transition to the Handbook, where they form the basis of explanations of new tools, behaviours or actions.

## ALL CHANGE!

I wrote the story so novices and hardened change and project leaders could enjoy it, the latter guessing just ahead of what was written what was coming next. A very satisfying feeling.

Ethics are so important. Innovation is crucial. But above all, stakeholder centricity and engagement must never be outweighed by coercion and narrative. Over the past several years, we have seen the impact of the use of power and authority without ethics. They are fabulous and fast for delivering change and compliance but leave human debris and broken dreams in their wake. We have all learned that sustainable change is **human-centred** not **solution-centred**.

The lockdown crisis has been like the boy who shouted at the parade that the emperor had no clothes on. In an instant, traditions and practices we thought were forever were replaced by different ways of working we could have easily adopted twenty years earlier but had not.

Now, literally everyone is going to have to be able to manage change - to recreate their lives to connect, communicate, collaborate and cognite.

So, I've made five big changes in this book. It has been painful discarding sentences I remember crafting so clearly hour-by-hour, losing some of the jokes and surprises I had carefully woven into the previous version. I hope the pain is worth it and that you find the changes worthwhile.

1. I have changed stories and cases and examples to make them more recognizable to a newer generation.

2. I have added two additional sections. One on how to deliver **ZERO-defect projects** and one on **Transformation**. When All Change! came out in the early 1990's, and I wrote about 'Foggy projects' the idea was revolutionary. Now, popular methods like Agile attempt to deal with the uncertainty and emergence of Foggy projects. But now people have become aware of the waste and delay our current mindset generates. And in recent years, as the realization has dawned that the pace of the world has far outstripped our ability to learn, they have realised that there is another species of change. Change that only comes into being as it destroys what it is based upon. We call this Transformation.

3. I have integrated the book into the virtual reality campus QUBE. <https://QUBE.cc>. [QUBE@PentacleTheVBS.com](mailto:QUBE@PentacleTheVBS.com). You can request a coach to guide you or meet up with more experienced colleagues or network members. All the Performance Enhancement Tools (PETs) and methods described, are available and can be used collaboratively from anywhere in the world. *All Change!* is alive where ever YOU are.

4. I have added QR codes and weblinks to take you to detailed QwikGuides of the tools

5. I have made the language and examples in even more every-day language because I believe many of you will wish to share them with friends, colleagues and children as you lead and drive the changes that will shape your lives in our new world.

**Enjoy | Learn | Apply.**

## CHAPTER 1: FULL CIRCLE

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### *In which examples of change are described*

I have been here before. Well, not exactly in this particular location, but in exactly this situation before. It's Monday. It's summer. It's very, very hot, and I have nothing to do but sit in the shade of a large red and yellow umbrella and try to understand why I am out of a job. This time it's the Mediterranean; the last time it was the Great Barrier Reef.

Friday was different. Friday was three days ago. On Friday, I had a job - a responsible, well-paid job. Why, oh, why had I quit? On Friday, I had been convinced that I was right.

I play the scene through in my mind. I notice another new email. I'm bored with what I'm doing, so I decide to open it now to see if it's interesting. I see myself clicking to open it. I can even feel my blood pressure rising, just as it had then. I grab at the phone and punch in numbers. A lady answers at the other end, singing, 'Infotech Solutions Limited, Hans de Vries' office, Jenny Jones here, how can I be of assistance?' I hear myself slam the door to my office behind me. I swoop through the door labelled 'Chief Executive', past Jenny without saying 'Hello.' Suddenly I am standing in the middle of the office, leaning over the enormous walnut desk. I'm really mad. I'm ranting.

What has ended my 15-year career at Infotech Solutions Ltd. is the 'Go-For-It' Project. The title of the initiative had been dreamt up by

Hans de Vries, our CEO. He had attended a seminar on 'AI, Robotics & Digital Transformation'. For him, it was an evangelical experience. The very next day, he had called a seven o'clock breakfast meeting of the board. I was the only non-board member present. This was not unusual. As one of our firm's program & project leaders, I was often invited to crisis meetings. But this was different. There was no crisis; in fact, business was going very well. Hans had talked excitedly for about half an hour about how all our competitors were gearing up to 'eat our lunch' and that we could only look to the future with confidence if we went for it.

At this point, he had turned towards me and asked me to spearhead something he described as 'Our culture transformation transfusion.' It is hard to be told that your organisation's future depends on you and *only* you and not be caught up in the hype. I had readily accepted. My job as project leader was to plan and control the implementation of a series of initiatives which would be championed by various board directors. I expected it to be a challenge but I didn't really understand what I was letting myself in for.

There were two real problems with 'Go-For-It'. The first was that no one at Infotech had the faintest idea how to change a culture. We didn't even really know what a culture was. I think that I learnt slowly as the project progressed.

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Although I learnt slowly, the rest of the organisation did not learn at all. So steadily, a gap in understanding grew between me and everyone else. This gap made it more and more difficult for me to communicate with the senior managers in terms that they understood. They would argue with me over points which I felt were irrelevant to the progress of the project.

They didn't really understand many of the words I started using, such as generative, customer-centricity, digital capabilities, LLM, technology enablement and enterprise models. For example, they couldn't understand why I could not give them a progress report stating the percentage completion of the project (I could tell them about the IT spend and little else). They were also concerned because there did not seem to be a long-term spend budget for the project; the main reason for this was that I would only propose spending money on items such as cloud data storage once I had fully understood the need for it. And that tended to happen only when I felt that it was the way to make sure that progress would be made. This made it look, to senior management, as if I was making it up as I went along.

The second main problem was that, although no one would admit it, no one, including Hans, was really sure of the purpose of the project. Was it: to give us better revenues; to improve customer retention; to get everyone in the company working in the same way using technology; to improve product quality; to reduce running costs; to empower the staff; or was it something else? At every bi-monthly meeting it seemed to me that the steering group would invent a new purpose for the project. Some directors took advantage of this lack of clarity and launched initiatives which they had

been wanting to pursue for years under the 'Go-For-It' banner, claiming it was in line with the objectives of the project. For example, the HR Director pushed through a new online AI-powered performance management process he had been sold by his favourite consultant. The process was very time-consuming, especially for line managers. What was worse, in taking up so much time it was in direct conflict with another initiative on individual productivity and performance improvement sponsored by the Operations Director.

That was last year. Last Friday I stormed into Hans de Vries' office, thumped the desk and put forward an ultimatum, insisting that I either got support from all the members of the board or I was leaving. He couldn't guarantee their support and now I was on a holiday of indeterminate length.

It really is great weather. The sea is a light greenish-blue colour which matches the sky perfectly. I look towards the horizon and return my mind to the problem I've been working on all holiday. I say to myself out loud, 'You keep repeating to yourself that you are right. If you *are* right then how come you are in this mess?' In my heart I knew that I had done the right thing but I can't really explain to myself how I have got to an end result which I haven't planned for and don't want.

I don't really understand and I never have. During twenty years in management, I had often been given responsibility for projects. The twenty years were punctuated, stretching backwards, like poplar trees lining a long, straight, Roman road, but planted at uneven distances. There they were, my initiatives, my projects. It was supposed to always be the same.

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The excitement at the start of the project, the initial briefing, working out what was to be done, getting a team together, getting the bulk of the tasks done and then passing it over to the final users. But it never was. It was never as smooth as that; hiccups, backtracking, surprise 'grillings' by senior managers, cash crises, late deliveries, concessions. Things always seemed to go wrong and I'd never really understand why and I still didn't. I'd asked other people and discovered that they were also mystified.

'The problem is that each project is different!' I'm talking to myself again. Along that twenty-year journey, I must have attended dozens of one day courses and seminars on project management. I went in search of the Holy Grail. Usually what I took away was more like a plastic, non-recyclable cup; a few good ideas and hints. 'They try to teach you a set of complex tools, usually to help with something like timetabling tasks or assessing risks. Or they offer philosophy on life and how your whole being must change to be 'Agile' and nimble. I learnt what was presented but back at work no one understands what I'm on about. And in reality, the learning was mostly pointless since all of the problems which come up are either unscheduled or are people problems.'

My mind wanders reluctantly backwards over my time at Infotech. The last time I almost resigned was over the Office Relocation. I am not enjoying recalling the past. I feel like an old soldier recalling the terrors of crossing a minefield in the dark without the aid of a mine detector.

Office Relocation had been my first *internal* project. Unlike all the other projects at Infotech, this was one we were doing for ourselves to

ourselves. There was no outside client. There was no money to be made directly, only money to be spent, spent on subcontractors such as the removals firm. The reason for the move was to reduce our costs by moving to a cheaper area, reducing the amount of office floor space by reducing the number of individual offices we required. It was this second requirement which was the source of my problems. I'll never forget how my life changed when it was announced that I was to lead the relocation and would be responsible for all its aspects including office allocation and car parking. I instantly experienced an upsurge of popularity, for the following two weeks. I met and got to know more people in the organisation than I had during my previous six years.

There were two types of approach. I preferred the first, which basically constituted approaching me at the coffee machine or in the canteen, asking if I would like them to buy me a coffee and a biscotti. Later, I would first be gently questioned (so that they could find out what the choice of office accommodation was). Next, the conversation would switch to a long list of reasons, medical and non-medical, why such and such an office was an essential matter of life or death for my benefactor.

The second approach was in no way subtle and was reserved for use by directors and senior managers. I would first hear on the grapevine that so-and-so was in no way pleased by something I was alleged to have done. I would then be urgently summoned to a meeting. I would arrive and be asked to wait, for at least fifteen minutes, by a stern looking secretary. Meetings were usually scheduled so that I would either see the CEO going in or coming out of the director's office. I then had to sit through an

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hour-long explanation of why this-or-that department was absolutely essential for the success of the organisation and listen to stories about how this-or-that department had saved the company from ruin many times in the past.

The other thing I recall from that **internal** project was that few people, if any, stuck to what they agreed in meetings or discussions. It seemed as if, not having written contracts, they felt free to do as they pleased, when they pleased. Once, I completely lost my temper with the HR manager. He had promised to deliver lists of needs for our disabled staff. We needed the information in order to allow us to start the process of allocating space. Without it, we could make no progress with anything else. I called him up when the report was two days late and he flatly denied ever having offered any information. I flipped. I told him in no uncertain terms, both what I thought of him and exactly what I expected from him and by when, adding a description of how his widow would find him if he did not follow my instructions to the letter. The volume of my voice must have been tremendous, it had a similar effect to the trumpets at Jericho. The half-height partition cubicle walls did not actually fall over, instead I found myself completely surrounded by sixty heads staring at me over their tops. I have never felt so embarrassed.

I finally solved the problems of matching people's actual needs, egos and status by ignoring actual needs and simply ranking the offices by desirability and advantages and then matching them to our organisational chart. It wasn't perfect but at least it saved me from being lynched by everyone.

I had joined Infotech by accident. After my three months in Australia, where I had hung about and done exactly what I was doing now—nothing—I had returned to London. Two further months of aimlessness had broken my irresponsible spirit and I would have taken any job offered.

As assistant to the quantity surveyor, it was my job to ensure that everything went strictly according to plan from day-to-day. I had to make sure that there was no wastage in either tasks or materials. In practice this meant an eye for detail on just about everything happening on the site. The complexity of the job amazed me. Individually the tasks themselves were simple enough but the complexity of the interconnections between the architects, electricians, bricklayers, scaffolding experts, geologists and engineers was simply mind boggling. I began to appreciate that each of the skill groupings thoroughly understood their part of the task. They had, in fact, built up significant expertise by doing more or less the same thing on several previous projects. The difficulty with the building project was that it was large and complex and that their skills had never been used in that particular combination before. I enjoyed meeting and working with such a wide range of groups, each of which seemed to have its own language and characteristics, from the brickies talking about 'IG lintels' to the site manager with their 'Oh no! Not another rev!' which they would shout at their mobile phone every time they got a notification.

In spite of that, the job hadn't suited me. Focusing on details and being mean are not part of my character and I found that after a while everyone seemed to have worked out a way of getting round me.

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So, I joined what was called Infotech Solutions Ltd. The business concept was to use the internet, data and information technology to supply business solutions to organisations. Our sales literature used the words Effective, Efficient, Productivity and Profit in all twenty-four combinations. The claim was that we helped businesses achieve these much-desired states.

I'd been looking for a proper job. What I got was projects. I was given the title 'Assistant Systems Analyst', but in reality, at that time, our roles were not so well defined and I was more of a general dog's body/trouble shooter/progress chaser. Chasing progress alone was a full-time job. I spent the next two years hot on the heels of a series of projects which ran, ran and ran. In the end we nicknamed them *Locos* (short for locomotives) to try to encapsulate the way in which they gradually gained momentum, shot off down the wrong spur of track, so that no one knew where they were, and with those on board finding them impossible to stop. My most vivid memory is that of the programmers constantly promising that since they were '90% of the way there they would only need another week to finish off the job' and insisting that there were 'only a few bugs to find and sort out.'

When, eventually, the day of unveiling finally arrived, without fail, a ritual would take place involving the end users, the ones who actually would have to live with the wizardry. As if working to a pre-written script, they would use the words 'slow', 'awkward', 'difficult'. This would be followed by expressions like 'once you get used to it' and 'why has the screen frozen?' After a suitable period of silence the users would decide that there had been *much change* but *little improvement* and would begin to

demonstrate their ingratitude by insisting on a long list of modifications.

But I'd tried to get a better understanding of what happened in projects. Over the years I'd also tried to discuss these problems with other project leaders. Though I had many problems with projects, talking to other project leaders made it seem as if I was the only one with problems. As a rule, they tended not to confess to having any problems at all! Those who admitted to difficulties usually described them in the past tense. I understood their behaviour since I myself had often put on a brave and confident face as the only method of surviving disastrous projects. This survival strategy made fellow project managers secretive about successes and failures and very difficult to learn from. That was another strange thing about managing projects, it wasn't like being a line manager. If anything at all went wrong all the fingers automatically pointed directly at you. The only aspect in which it was similar was that if things went right, you could almost guarantee that someone else would get the credit.

Maybe I can work it out for myself? After all, I've lived through so many myself. 'Right, that's settled then. What was that quote?' I remember. *'Those who do not learn from the past are condemned to repeat it.'* 'By the end of this fortnight I really want to have understood how it all works.' I shall start off by looking back over my own experience.

I start to try to remember my past, always a difficult thing for me - I love the new, I love progress, I love pushing forward. I decide to think of myself after I graduated. I had taken two years off before going to university which meant that I was a very mature student. A bit old for

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employers who were looking for a fresh, bright, young graduate. Also, I don't think that my bushy beard and long hair helped much. So, I was delighted when I was offered a post as a research assistant at the University. The money was not brilliant but I compared it to living on my student loan, and it felt as if it would support me in unparalleled luxury. The thought of being able to live in a heated flat again was too enticing and I'd accepted the post immediately.

I was to study the molecular structures of Soy proteins. The Green movement and Vegetarianism had grown, there was a need to develop meat substitutes. High-protein soy beans could substitute. But once cooked, they smelt and tasted like beans and gave you wind. You couldn't make them into casseroles. At the time, no one had a clue how to make vegetable protein taste and feel like meat. It was a challenge. If only you could, then you could make your million. Organisations were willing to pour money into studying molecular structures. This, they thought, held the key.

I was young. I'd dreamt of being a scientist. It looked exciting. And it was funded by two commercial organisations. The Confederation of Soya Bean Growers (usually abbreviated to CSBG) and KET Ltd., a heating equipment manufacturer. The bonus of being commercially funded was that I could sniff the scent of a real job in industry if all went to plan.

My boss was an egghead. At twenty-five he'd established the structure of a particularly tricky molecule using a piece of equipment he'd invented, designed and built. He was a tall, thin, arrogant man with a bushy beard, called Professor Costerly. Since he had the only, very expensive piece of equipment needed for the

work, he was invited to lead the two year, million-pound project. The stated goal of the project was to find out the right strains of soya bean to process on KET's equipment as meat substitutes. The Prof's hidden goal was to find an opportunity to use his equipment to study new and possibly Nobel prize-winning molecular structures.

It was a terrible time. Years spent repeating experiments, having to rely on often erroneous analytical results from a group of de-motivated, demoralised co-workers who were bored with the equipment and didn't understand the project goals. The Prof did not communicate directly with us. He constantly invented new goals and experiments for us, and refused to take us seriously when we suggested that we were all more than slightly miffed at the way things were going.

Three years later, we'd spent almost two million pounds, were one year late and, although we now had some very academically interesting micrographs of molecular structures, we had no real information for our commercial sponsors. Well, what I mean is that we continued to call them sponsors, although six months after the start of the project, KET got a new managing director who didn't share his predecessor's enthusiasm for the project. And the CSBG was having difficulty maintaining the interest of its members. The year after we started was both warm and wet and the bumper crop which had resulted had led to a price war, prices had plummeted to a tenth of the previous year. Most of its members were either fighting each other or had given up the fight and simply gone bankrupt.

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The Vice-Provost, who initially had seen the project only in terms of the financial benefits it offered, was not prepared for things going wrong. He put more and more pressure on the Prof to deliver. The Prof kept us working on his agenda and simply used it as a way to put us under more pressure.

For me, it all came to a head one afternoon when I heard that Prof. Costerly had unilaterally cancelled a series of experiments I was planning, simply because they didn't make use of his precious equipment. I hit the roof, told him that the project did not revolve around his 'stupid, expensive and trashy pile of junk' and described what he could do with his project. Later that day, I bought a last minute, low-cost airline ticket to Australia. It was the furthest I could get away for the least money. I really have come full circle.

## CHAPTER 2: MY OLD MATE

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*In which the difficulties of successfully implementing change are discussed*

It's been raining solidly for the past three days. Three days of horizontal rain striking against the window panes and then running down them in a thick, uneven layer. By mid-afternoon I am bored with staring at the walls of my room. Staying on the beach is fine when it's sunny; you are a few minutes' walk from restaurants, sand and other fun seekers. When the weather is not good, it's the pits! There is absolutely nothing to do. I decide to visit the local chateau which will at least be dry and will allow me to stretch my legs. It is there, wandering around the cellar, that I notice the shiny, bald patch. You can hardly miss it. It shines or rather glistens, even in the cool darkness of the cellar. Then he turns round, and I slowly realise that I recognise the face belonging to the beacon. Instinctively and without having worked out who exactly I'm about to address, I smile and say, 'Hello'.

The eyes in the face stare straight into mine and with a smile of recognition he says 'G'day mate.' 'Did you ever find a job then?' A hand extends to meet mine in a warm, vigorous handshake.

His question answers my question. It is Franck. I had first met him at Surfers Paradise in Australia. He had also been on an 'extended holiday'. At the time he had just finished six years of studying psychological diagnostic techniques. We had become firm friends for the

simple reason that both of us at the time were looking for some way of putting meaning into our lives. We had lost touch and I hadn't seen him for years.

I reply, 'Yes, eventually several, but I've used them all up now.'

He says, 'What we need is a cold tube of beer, but would a glass of sparkling white wine do instead?'

I nod and point to the sign which says restaurant. In no time we are reminiscing over the bad old times convincing ourselves that they were the best times of our lives.

I discover that Franck had also finally found a career, but now he works for himself. His description makes him sound like a supply teacher at a high school. He had described himself as an 'educator'. It takes me about an hour to get round to the topic which has been on my mind all holiday. I tell him, 'Twenty years in projects, I've had some success with about half. What frustrates me is that I still haven't got a clue how to guarantee project success.'

He smiles at me as if I have said something really stupid, but says nothing.

I continue. 'I know that no one else has worked it out because they are all as surprised as I am whenever a project goes belly-up.'

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He smiles again and it makes me feel that I need to put forward my theory on projects, so that he will not think that I'm completely dumb. I have a voice I usually reserve for presentations to senior management. I call it my 'confident-bullshit' voice. I use it. I say, 'Of course, projects go wrong because we don't push people hard enough.'

That smile again, and then he asks, 'So do you mean that you never have budget overruns from your team members claiming overtime?'

'Yes, we do,' I reply 'but they only do overtime because we don't have enough control over what they do, and so they don't do what we need, when we need it.'

'Oh, I see!' he replies, 'Your fifty percent success rate comes from projects where you have had a dedicated team over whom you've had total control.'

'No,' I insist, 'not quite. We also need better planning tools and techniques.'

'I understand,' he says, and tops up my glass. 'What you are saying is that if only we could plan it all out in greater detail, then it would all happen exactly according to plan.'

'I don't think you understand,' I say. 'Even with good plans, life just isn't like that, and,' I add, 'it takes years and years to become a decent project manager. It's very complex. You have to know how to do most of the jobs on the project, and all the methods and computer planning and control techniques.'

'I see. So you've never worked on a project for a mature, widely experienced project leader which has gone awry?'

I remember the building site and start to wriggle. 'Well, sometimes there are special cases,' I say.

For the first time in our conversation, Franck offers an opinion. What strikes me is the way in which he does it. His voice seems calm, deep and resonant, as if he is speaking through a muted megaphone. He says, '*What I have found is that however complex the situation, it is unusual to find more than a half dozen underlying causes.*'

My instinctive reaction to any statement that I don't really understand is to argue with it in the hope that in discussion it will become clearer. 'I'm not sure I agree,' I say. 'This is a really thorny problem which has taxed many of the best minds for a long time.'

Franck says nothing but simply smiles, with much too much confidence.

I say, 'Maybe it can't be solved. Maybe there is nothing special which guarantees project success. It could just be luck.'

He smiles again and insists, 'I don't think you really believe that or you would not have started this conversation. So what do you think is the real cause of project failure? ...And anyway, what do you mean by failure? Explain it all to me. Start from the beginning.'

## CHAPTER 3: HOLDING ONTO YOUR GAINS

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*In which the hard and soft criteria of project success are established*

‘So what do people say once it’s over?’ asks Franck. He’s stopped smiling now and looks at me as if he is hungry for a meal. He seems so serious over the problem that I get the feeling that he thinks that the meal is going to be me.

‘It depends on who you ask,’ I reply. ‘The classical measures of project success are Time–Cost– and Specification. The client is usually most concerned with the first two whilst the end user is usually most interested in specification. That is, ‘does it do what we intended it to do for us?’ However, I find more these days that for **business projects**, clients are often as interested in *revenues as costs or sometimes the impact on share price so it feels relatively cheap*. The additional revenue from a new product development can often far outweigh the costs. Also, clients are more interested in the *timeliness than time* itself. They want things *fast*. They are keen to see something delivered along the way rather than waiting until the end. To use the new product example again, as long as they beat the competition to the window of opportunity, the exact timing is not as important as its timeliness. At the end of the day the client usually wants to be sure that *the benefits they receive from having done the project far outweigh the effort put in, and the end user wants something good.*’

I plough on in a steady stream. ‘But there are other groups of people who also have comments

to make about project success. The person or steering group which owns or sponsors the project usually has a view. Their measure of success is usually pretty selfish and relates to themselves. For example, how much political hassle it has been to them to push the project through. Furthermore, there is the project team, who try to assess whether they enjoyed the experience and would be willing to go through it with the project leader again. The accountants, who are still upset because you didn’t spend, on what you said you would, when you said you would. And then there are the senior managers, whose noses are ‘put out of joint’ because you have crossed into their patch unknowingly, and they are determined to kill your project stone dead.’

‘Whoa! Slow down, slow down,’ he says, waving his arms up and down. ‘It seems to me that lots of people hold a stake in the project.’

‘Well yes but the *only* important one is the client, as long as we can keep the client happy...’

‘You just told me’, says Franck steadily, ‘that sometimes when you are half way through a project suddenly, out of the blue, you’ve received an angry or aggressive email or a rocketing from some senior manager or union official or someone else who you thought had nothing at all to do with your project?’

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I'm thrown by the question. I'm sure I didn't mention the rude emails. How does Franck know about them? The answer to his question is yes. Yes. Frequently. It's a horrible feeling, just as things are getting going on the project, out of the blue, like a bolt of lightning, it strikes you. It leaves you disoriented, annoyed and confused, and not wanting to read emails or answer the phone for a while. They usually start with 'I have just heard...' And if you don't handle them right, they will fight you and obstruct you for the rest of the project. I reply softly, 'Yes.'

He probes. 'Why does this happen?'

'I don't know.' I reply perplexed. 'I guess, they seem to think that the project is something to do with them.'

Franck continues to probe. 'How does this same thing happen over and over and over?'

'Busybodies?' I venture.

'I don't think so,' he says flatly. 'Go back to what you said before.'

'What?' I ask. 'You mean *'that they think that the project has something to do with them'*'?

He nods. 'Yes, and what do you think?'

'That it doesn't,' I say slowly, as I begin to understand his point.

'And who's right?' He pauses and waits for a reply from me. I know he's right but don't reply. Eventually he continues. 'It seems to me that there are a lot of people who have a stake and there are even more than you think.'

'Yes.' I agree 'There are a lot of **stakeholders**. I sometimes feel like Dracula's side-kick, constantly watchful and alert, trying to avoid an

army of vampire killers who are determined to drive a stake through the heart of my project.'

Franck laughs and calls the waiter over.

'Yes,' I say thoughtfully, 'you're definitely right. There are a lot of stakeholders. Some have a financial or organisational stake in the **outcome**. For example, the client or sponsor who is actually paying for the project is the person who is really **driving** the change. They tend to drive it towards the outcomes they want. Other people may be interested in the outcome but they may not be in the driving seat. For example, the sales department, which will grow as a result of the project, are wanting to succeed. However, the people who will lose out as a result of the project also have a stake and wish for you to fail.'

'Are some stakeholders more concerned with what happens during the project than the outcome?'

'Who do you mean?'

'How about the ones who are holding and steadying a ground stake for you to hit?'

I look at him completely puzzled.

'Your team, I mean for example,' says Franck.

I nod vigorously. 'And all the favours I need to call in, from across the organisation. It's when you need to rely on work from people over whom you have no responsibility or authority that you realise something which is probably true for every stakeholder.'

'What's that?' he asks.

'It also seems that some people are more interested in the **softer** measures of **your style**

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**and how it feels to them** rather than the **harder** measures of **tasks and what is to be delivered**. Receiving favours, generating motivation and enthusiasm are far more dependent on how you dealt with people last time round. Did you share the whole vision with them so that they could understand where their contribution fitted in? Did you thank them? Did you make them do pointless work? Were your instructions useful and clear? ***The style with which you worked with them has a far more profound impact on them than informing them that the project or the tasks are going along to time, cost and quality.***

Franck leans across the table to fill my glass, as he does this that hungry look comes over his features again, and in a firm voice he repeats the question he had asked me five minutes earlier. 'So?' he asks conspiratorially, 'what do people say once it's over?'

With my new insight, I reply, speaking slowly, to make sure I get it right. *'There are many stakeholders with different success criteria.* However, they fall into three groups. Some focus on the **outcomes delivered** by the project and look at the *hard* and tangible *outcomes* in order to establish how they and the business will be affected by the change. In a business context, their concern is with the *financial contribution* of the project, its *timeliness in providing competitive advantage*, and whether it delivers the *specific technical and business objectives it was set up for*.

Others are primarily concerned with the way in which they are *managed, influenced and involved* **during** the project. This group, responsible for delivering the change, usually involves the core team, all the other direct and

indirect contributors to the project (including external suppliers and subcontractors). They are measuring success against their own *personal feelings, levels of motivation* and the *learning and development* that they get out of the project. In most projects today, this group is far more important than you might think because you usually have to work with them again in the future and they can have a significant influence over the rest of your career by actively or passively preventing you from succeeding the next time round, or simply by bad mouthing you to future teams and as a result, making it difficult for you to get their enthusiasm.

The third group are primarily concerned with *both* the outcomes of the project and how well they think that they have been managed during the project. Usually this group includes the project client, end users, project consumers and the project sponsor or steering group. For them, success is a measure of how all their expectations, both **hard** and **soft** have been met throughout the project.'

'Good', says Franck, 'so now we know what you are trying to avoid in projects. But that's only the first step. Now we need to work our way backwards systematically to find out what are the skills or knowledge that all project managers lack, or let's be generous, which they fail to use consistently to guarantee success.

Let's start by trying to understand the business part of the problem. So, tell me, what do you think is the most common cause of problems with timeliness, money or specification?'

'I don't think that it is as simple as that,' I reply, trying not to show my surprise at how

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naive he seems to be. 'If there is one cause then I would say that it is the lack of planning.'

He looks straight at me and says provocatively, 'So what you are telling me is that all well-planned projects deliver the three business requirements?'

An image flashes through my mind. It is the image of my second ever project, the one on the construction site. I remember the Portakabin where we had our tea breaks on rainy days. The cabin had been about thirty feet long and about ten wide. All the way round the walls at two levels three feet high there had been a band of steadily yellowing paper, our project plan. I remember someone telling me that it had taken a month to work out in detail all the tasks that had to be carried out and the order in which they had to be done. When I saw it, it was already two months out of date; the tasks we were working on each day bore no relation to what was on the wall. Many of the tasks which were represented as being one-offs we had in fact, done several times over, either because we made mistakes in carrying them out or because they had been wrongly specified in some way. We had had plenty of planning but once things started to go wrong, they had simply gone from bad to worse and it had been impossible to keep the plan up-to-date with the changes.

I finally reply. 'No. And furthermore, even with excellent plans something unforeseen may occur. You need to know the status of the project all the time and be able to catch up or change your plans. This can be made even worse by tasks which are done wrong or have to be repeated to meet specifications.'

'You've given me four common causes, are there any more?'

'Yes, there is one more. The original financial or duration estimates may have been wrong or the specifications very demanding or unachievable, so that when you deliver the possible you are still seen to have failed.'

Franck takes a pen out of his top pocket and starts to make notes on the napkin. He writes:

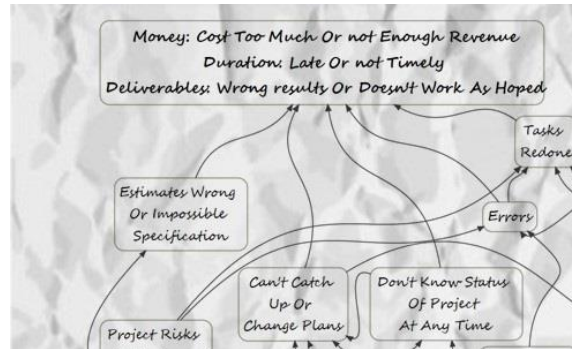


Figure 3.1 Franck's Napkin *Blowing Bubbles*

'What are you doing?' I ask.

'Blowing bubbles,' he replies, and without pausing, continues, 'On projects where tasks are repeated often, what else happens?'

'You mean apart from being late and overshooting on budget?'

'Yes,' he confirms.

I explain. 'The people working on the tasks get fed up. If they get bored as well, then their attention to detail tends to decrease and as a result they make more mistakes. All the people waiting to receive the outputs of the tasks become impatient. Their confidence in what is to be produced by the project starts to fall. They may lose interest in the project altogether or it

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may fall down their priority list. If the task is for the client and it is redone several times, this is often enough to turn the client off you and it may become impossible to win future business.'

He looks up at me from the napkin he has been writing on and asks, 'Does this happen often?'

'Yes,' I reply, 'all the time.'

Franck writes '*team?*' and '*contributors fed-up*' and then adds two arrows to his scribbles, one from *tasks redone* to *contributors fed-up* and one from *contributors fed-up* to *errors*. 'Do you find that once a team starts redoing tasks all your plans get increasingly out of control?' he asks me.

'Yes,' I reply, 'sometimes the only way to overcome the problem is to change the people involved. How do you know about that problem?'

'Just a hunch,' he says cryptically. 'Tell me, what else do your two groups of stakeholders say at the end?'

Realising how much I have gained from the last ten minutes, how much the pieces are starting to come together, simply because I have been forced to be more precise in defining the issues, I'm thoughtful as I answer. 'Well, you can end up with an unhappy or demotivated project team. By project team I mean my core team, who help me run the project and are very closely associated with it, the working team made up of those who are supposed to be working on the project and all those people whose goodwill I've relied upon.'

'You mean your invisible friends?' he says.

I laugh at the idea. 'I suppose you could call them that! It's a great title. Just like when you were a child when your parents couldn't see your invisible friend, but you could and you knew what they were up to all the time. I definitely agree.' I giggle. 'Let me introduce you to my army of invisible friends. Meet ... *The Invisible Team*.'

Franck grins. 'Speak for yourself,' he says whilst making circling movements with his finger against the side of his head to indicate that I am obviously crazy. A waiter sidles up to us, in as obvious a fashion as possible, clears his throat and demands, in French, 'Are you ready to order yet?' For the first time in four hours I notice our surroundings. It looks as if all the day trippers have left. The other clientele is dressed for an evening out. I turn back to face Franck who shrugs.

He rises from his chair, plucking his mobile from his top pocket and says, 'Just let me make a phone call and then maybe we can stay on and grab a bite to eat.'

Whilst he's gone, I try to use the time to prepare for the next part of our discussion. I'm enjoying the way it's going. To be honest, I'm rather surprised at the interest he has taken in my problem. I've always thought of it as a rather specialised problem. I had not expected anyone unconnected with projects to have had the slightest interest. After all, Franck was only a teacher, or what was it he called himself, an 'Educator'?

But I get distracted watching the guests at a rather formal-looking event across the courtyard. The smartly dressed guests are huddled tightly, in packs of four or five. I watch as a lone latecomer arrives, sees the crowd and

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stops, slightly intimidated by the noise and intensity of the internal focus of the groups and heads for the bar.

As he sips his drink, he looks slyly over the top of the glass. I suspect he is trying to decide which group to join, which he wants to be *included* in.

He suddenly sets off at speed towards a tall group of men. On arriving he is totally ignored. They don't want to *include* him. He deftly does a quick side step as if he was heading elsewhere. The next, a group of women. They part their circle to let him in.

He listens for a while, nodding as the others *control* the conversation and making short comments. Eventually he begins to speak continuously, taking control of the topic. And in time, they all turn to listen to him. From his gestures it seems he makes a self-deprecating comment. They all throw back their heads in laughter as he smiles. He seems to have been *open* and shared something personal. Then one of the women points at herself and comments and they all laugh again!

I look down at the table and notice the napkin Franck has been scribbling on and reach across the table to pick it up. 'What a crazy way to make notes.' I think. 'It's not a mind-map.' The diagram is untidy. It looks like a pile of spaghetti. Arrows cross each other, one set goes round in a circle. I follow the arrows of the circle round, reading the words out softly to myself, '*Errors ---> tasks redone --> team fed-up --> reduced attention to detail --> errors*. What on earth does that mean?' Then I remember

Franck's question, the one which had surprised me, and my answer.

He'd asked. 'Do you find that once a team starts redoing tasks all your plans get increasingly out of control?'

And I had replied 'Yes. Sometimes the only way to overcome the problem is to change the people involved. How do you know about that problem?'

'The sly goat!' I jerk my head up. 'So that's how he knew.' I had told him myself. He obviously has some shorthand way of writing down what I say and then pieces it all together and feeds it back to me. Of course, if errors lead to tasks being redone and redone tasks lead to the team getting fed-up, and a fed-up team tends to pay less attention to detail then this will lead to more errors being made. Once that starts it's obvious that it'll snowball, getting steadily worse. That was just typical of Franck, always pulling a fast one of some sort.

Just then he returns to the table and sits down. I'm restrained, not eager to let him in onto what I have just discovered. He notices the napkin in front of me and asks, 'Trying to decipher my hieroglyphics?'

'I think I may have made some progress,' I reply, but I can't resist asking, 'How does it work?'

'We've only just started,' he says. 'I'll explain it later when we have made some real progress.' Then he looks at me in an apologetic way. 'I'm afraid that the explanation will have to wait though. I have to go and can't stay for dinner. Maybe we can meet again?'

## CHAPTER 4: A PANACEA WHICH CAN MAKE YOU ILL

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*In which the role of communication in change management is explored*

I come off the phone. It's been an expensive call. Extra roaming charges over my limit. I hadn't wanted to make it, but after all I am out of work and I need to look for another job and the only time that I can call to follow up the applications that I have put in for jobs is during working hours, UK working hours. And you can't trust a first impression to a mobile, can you? The particular application I'm following up is a reply to an advert from a small consultancy firm asking for 'Change Consultants'. I've heard of them and the description of the job sounds a lot like some of the project management jobs that I've done in the past. I've always been a bit of a smooth talker and I'm convinced that as long as I can get in for an interview, I stand a good chance of convincing them that I am the right person for the job.

The reason the call took so long was that I had been trying to reach the senior partner but had been sent around in circles. I had started off with a receptionist. I had explained who I was and why I needed to talk to the senior partner; she had put me on hold; then I had gone to a secretary, junior consultant, back to the receptionist, a partner, the admin manager, back to the receptionist and finally to the senior partner's secretary who informed me that she was out but would probably wish to speak to me and could I try again later?

What had infuriated me most was that each time and with each person I had had to go through my entire explanation. It seemed that they were incapable of passing on simple messages to each other! What would they have done if I had been a client? In the middle of a project, **a team incapable of communicating cannot function.**

'Of course,' I exclaim, 'that is it! Communication. That is the secret of project success.' It is so simple. I wonder why I had forgotten to mention that to Franck yesterday, but now it is so obvious to me. I am surprised that he had not suggested it himself. And being a teacher, or what was it he calls himself? An *educator*; surely that's what he does for a living?'

It's hard for me to think of Franck as a teacher, a respectable member of the community. In my mind Franck was still the good-time anarchist that he had been twenty years ago. At the time his main interests were beer, beer, and solving the world's problems. He could make us laugh for hours by the way he would take a really serious problem like world hunger, turn it on its head and come up with crazy solutions.

One of his solutions for that was to brand food aid, not from the country it came from, but by the politician who had ensured that it be sent. So, for example you could have corned beef hash

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in cans with a photo of the Great Leader on the side. Knowing how shallow and egocentric politicians are, they would compete fiercely to try to get their face seen by as many of the starving as possible. The problem would thus be solved overnight!

I'm sitting on the sofa in the front room of my apartment. It is a bright room and feels more like a home than a holiday chalet. It even has pictures on the walls. Opposite is a Monet painting of poplar trees. Fantastic these Impressionists. At this distance it looks very real and solid but I know that it is made up of mixed-up, small patches of unconnected colour. Above the mantelpiece there is a Toulouse-Lautrec poster of a woman dancing the can-can. It is painted in bold colours. The dancer's name is Jane Avril. I know this because her name is written, large, across the poster which was originally designed for advertising hoardings.

I sit there wondering how a person who can sink so many beers could possibly manage students. Thinking about students and Franck reminds me of my university research job. The job I had just left when I first met Franck. I feel my chest tighten as it used to from frustration. Isn't it strange how, after all these years, I still have not gotten over the experience? The reason I feel uncomfortable is that I remember him, my boss, the telepathic academic.

I remember how every new development had been a complete surprise to the whole team and how little we knew or understood about what was going on overall. I remember how the sponsors, KET and CBSG, had been just as surprised as we had by each twist and turn in the project.

I say out loud to myself 'Communication is most definitely the key! Projects fail because there is not enough communication'. Franck had said that there were no more than half a dozen causes. He had overestimated. There was really only **one** underlying cause.

I smile and lean back in my chair. I feel so good about my conclusion that I have stopped feeling the pain of 40 euro wasted on an inconclusive phone call. There is nothing quite like feeling a genius to anaesthetise the aches and pains of life. Then, slowly, with the same dull feeling that you get at the start of a headache, I begin to feel uncomfortable about the conclusion I have just reached. I think, 'If a lack of communication is the main cause of project failure, then there won't be any 'failed' projects, where the project leader does lots of communication.'

'Oops!' I think, 'a small problem.' I remember the early projects at Infotech. The ones which we had called *Locos*. Each project had had a different project leader and since I was often working on more than one at a time. I'd had a good opportunity to compare the styles of the different project leaders. Now in retrospect, I try to remember particular details about their communication styles. I allow images of these leaders to swim into my mind, along with my initial image of Professor Costerly, and try to classify what they did. As it turns out, I don't have to think too long. The very first image completely disrupts my original conclusion. A conclusion that I'd based on a hunch and tried to make truth with one example. An example based on the Professor. The image which is causing the discomfort is four foot six, wears glasses and travels at a tremendously high speed down corridors. It is of Audrey Peters.

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Audrey had led one of Infotech's first finance systems automation and integration projects. Audrey had really believed in communication, *'The more the better,'* she believed. She kept us all up-to-date with daily briefings and weekly meetings. We were all obliged to attend the daily briefings. The problem was not with the briefings themselves. They were true to title. They were brief. The problem was that little of what was covered was of any relevance to three quarters of the people who were briefed. In practice, our brief had little to do with the broad spread of our daily activities, and made little difference. Because they were so frequent, the overall position of the project was never discussed and as a team member I had little idea of the bigger picture. The weekly meetings followed exactly the same formula, except in one respect. True, they were weekly and true we met. True too that meeting had little to do with what we did apart. And true they focused only on detail. The real difference was that they were tremendously boring.

Audrey's formula for 'get-togethers,' it seemed, was to make sure that we were provided with as many facts and as much data as was available, even if it did not answer any of the day-to-day questions which we faced. Audrey was also a great one for forwarding emails, which she had been sent, to the whole core team and any of the members of 'the invisible team' whose names she remembered whilst writing her cc list. In my early days on the project I used to wait to read the emails she'd sent me on the train on the way home in the evening to make sure I could get some real work done during the day. Eventually, I learnt that the trick to surviving the data deluge was to scan the 'action column' of the attachment for your initials. If they were absent the document could safely be deleted.

My phone buzzes. It's a text message. It's from the car-hire company. Apparently, there is a recall on the tyres of the car they have rented out to me – I have to go to a garage and have them swapped as soon as possible. 'Damn it!' I think. I'm going to be late. I'm going to be late for my appointment with Franck. I hate being late. Over the years I've found I feel worse and worse about being late. Especially with project work. I guess it's because it's so obvious to everyone if you're late. If you're late, they can tell that you're failing. It's much more difficult to hide than cash overspends or not meeting specs. And anyway, the hard criteria of success are of an order of magnitude harder to hide than upsetting or falling out with your stakeholders. It's very easy to hide the poor relationship which you have with your stakeholders, you can always claim to be getting on famously.

Well maybe not late if I can find the place now and they can do it in an hour I might just make it on time.

I check my hair in the mirror by the front door, open the door and head out towards the car. I glance at the fuel gauge to check if I have enough fuel. It reminds me of my earlier thoughts. Too much detailed factual data. Unsorted factual data not aimed at anyone in particular. Certainly not aimed at me. No answers to the questions that I had. Not enough of a view of overall progress. Audrey's project still ended up a Loco, coming in eventually a year late and 120 percent overspent with a fed-up team and an unhappy client.

What I conclude from Audrey and the Professor is that, what was important about communication was not 'how much' but

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whether it serves the purposes of the **person being communicated with**.

As I drive along, I know that I still do not have the full picture. So, I continue to work through my list of project leaders I've known. In particular I think about Bob Timson. Bob had joined Infotech from one of its equipment suppliers three months before I had. I suspected that he had been on an Authentic-Leadership course which had stressed the need for interpersonal communications. He excelled at this. His style was one-to-one communication. He would seek you out and discuss issues at great length if he had the full details. If he did not have the full details, he would simply make them up!

The process was exactly the same if you needed information or a decision. There was masses of communication, usually focused on what you were trying to achieve. Sometimes explaining where things had got to in terms of the bigger picture; but most of it was wrong or unclear. When it was wrong, it was wrong because in trying to be the font of all knowledge, he would be overgenerous with the truth. When it was unclear it was because he always communicated at such a level of detail, that it was as if he was providing you with detailed instructions of what your job required, in a minute-by-minute, step-by-step fashion. This would have been fine, if he actually understood the job, but since he had a manufacturing background he did not. As a result, he gave a patchy, confusing and inappropriate message.

So, to communicate successfully, *you need to send out messages **which are correct***. There is also a need to decide how much detail the person you are communicating with can handle.

There are probably three levels. *The **sponsor or client** may only wish to know the top level of the **bigger picture**. **Other stakeholders** are probably interested mainly in the **key issues**, whilst the **core team** may require the **full details**. **Providing detail when an overview is all that is needed is as bad as doing it the other way round**.*

I smile as a thought enters my head. If only Audrey's daily briefings had that agenda. If only her **emails** had been laid out in that way. *The **title being the big picture, the first block of text the key issues and then all the details and actions required!*** Think of all the hours that would have saved us all.

And then there was Patrick Phelan, the man who 'snatched defeat from the jaws of success. It had looked as if Infotech was about to net a real success. The client thought we were marvellous and had even started recommending us to other prospective customers. Team morale and spirit were high, a thing I have rarely seen. Project team members actually knowing their individual roles but also bending over backwards to help each other and to fill in any gaps, in roles, that arose as the project progressed. Most of the team members were only working on the one project rather than the normal practice of being spread over several projects.

Unfortunately, Hans de Vries, our CEO, had another one of his brilliant ideas. The timing of the idea was also unfortunate since it coincided with the closing stages of the project but before it had ended completely. At the board meeting in March of that year, he announced that full-time members of all projects would only be retained by the organisation at the end of the project, provided there was another project for them immediately to join. Joining another

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project team would not be automatic. Even if there were vacancies, the person would need to put a strong case, which was supported by the project leader of the project that they intended to join.

Pat learnt of this new policy from his copy of the minutes of the board meeting. It must have hit him hard because he decided two things. Firstly, that it was very bad news and secondly that the best way to get rid of bad news is to dilute it. This you do by telling as many people as you can as quickly as you can. Pat did a marvellous job at communication. First, he called us together and explained the company's circumstances. He then went through the details of the policy, giving us examples of what had happened on other projects, finally *asking us each to consider what the implications were for us*.

By explaining the **issue**, providing us with examples and **data** and then asking us a **question** about the implications for us we not only **got** the message we became fully engaged in the problem and began to **build** solutions

He then sent us round a memo summarising what had been covered. I believe that he actually had meant to help and reward us for our loyalty throughout the project. He knew that we had worked hard and did not want us to suffer by losing our jobs. I think he felt also that it was a stupid policy and wished to place the blame for its impact, fairly and squarely where it belonged; with the CEO.

He'd done an excellent job of communicating to us. He'd introduced the **Issue** clearly, provided us with concrete **Data**, asked us **Questions** to make us think for ourselves. That prompted us to fully engage. Then he made us **Build** the

solution together, which meant that we all understood what was at stake. Everyone on the project immediately started to plot, wheel-deal and scheme to move to other longer-term projects, as soon as possible. People with little left to do on the project let it drag on, making deliberate mistakes to give themselves more time to find a place on another project. Morale collapsed, since some of us were in direct competition with each other for future jobs, and the less scrupulous began to look for opportunities to denigrate the work being done by others. There was also some subtle sabotage. From the team's point of view, it was an immense success. Ninety-five percent of us stayed on with the company having managed the shift.

The project of course turned overnight into a disaster. The five percent we lost was Patrick. Four months later he had had enough, and quit.

*The **timing** of **communication** can seriously affect its usefulness. To communicate effectively you must **anticipate** the **thoughts** and **actions** you expect the person being communicated with to carry out.*

I arrive at the garage with speed. I rush into the workshop. Walk up to the desk and ask how long it will take to get the tyres changed. "An hour." they reply confidently. So I sit down to wait. I still have plenty of time. I pick up the out-of-date magazines and begin reading them, staring up occasionally at the scrolling 24-hour news on the TV. After a quarter of an hour, I glance round the corner and notice the car is where I left it. I stand up and walk to the desk. I ask for reassurance all will be done on time. The receptionist promises me that it will be fine. But now I'm tense. I can't concentrate on the out-of-

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date magazines. The news is not capturing my imagination. I sit upright. After another ten minutes I go back to the desk to check again. This time the receptionist does not smile. Now I refuse to sit, instead pacing up and down. I notice the car has been moved but only a couple of metres round the corner. I decide to approach the desk. The receptionist sees me coming and dodges out the back. I wait impatiently. No one returns. After another 10 minutes I ping the bell. Nothing. Another customer arrives. You explain the receptionist is out the back. The customer waits with you. Eventually the receptionist returns then pops out the back instantly returning with a set of keys for the other customer and says to them, "Follow me." and disappears again. I can feel the blood pulsating through my arteries in fury and stress. I pace like a hungry lion for ten more minutes. The receptionist returns and tells me, 'Your car is ready'. It is only three minutes late.

I set off at a fair clip up the hillside road. Enjoying the thrill of the hairpin bends. As I round this bend, I see a lorry pull out from a side road. I bring my fist down, hard, on the steering wheel. 'Ten more kilometres. Now I'm really going to be late.' I can see that I'm at the point at which the slope of the road is starting to get steeper. I shrug my shoulders and resign myself to the inevitable. I say to myself, 'Relax. After all you are on holiday' and then I go back to my problem.

The final project manager who swam into view was Oswald Micheson. The two things that struck you about Oswald were his height and his vanity. He wore his hair in a coiffured bouffant style all piled up above which made his four foot eleven seem more like five foot seven. He had started his career in sales. My theory was that

he'd never been good at selling and had been booted into projects. Anyway, somewhere along the way, he had acquired the looks and attitudes of a second-rate, second-hand car dealer. He was smarmy and slimy and had acquired the habit of saying things he thought sounded good. Statements like; 'This is a really exciting project', and 'I am committed to delivery on time', and 'Sticking to our budget is essential', were frequently used. There was however, one small problem. The context within which he made these pronouncements. It didn't really work. Saying, 'This is a really exciting project', without any hint of interest or excitement in his voice, or 'I am committed to delivery on time', whilst always turning up late for meetings, or 'Sticking to our budget is essential', whilst filing yet another enormous expense claim, just did not send out a coherent message. We soon learnt to **watch what he did rather than listen to what he said.**

In particular the women on the project hated and distrusted him. They said that he made their skin crawl. He could make my skin crawl also. Whenever he was being particularly insincere, he would adopt a very softly spoken tone. He used this soft and breathless voice whenever he wanted to drive a point home.

*To communicate effectively you must be **credible** to the person you are communicating with. **Everything you do must mirror the message** that you are trying to communicate. People watch closely what you **do** and use this as a far more reliable guide to what you **really** mean.*

I look at the lorry in front. It is filthy and puffing out ominous black clouds of smoke as it makes its way gradually up the hill. The logo on

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the back is a yellow arrow threaded through inter-linking circles and squares. There is a line of text below the logo. The text is covered in grime. I work to try to read what it says. It's a challenge. After two attempts I think I have it. It translates roughly as 'No matter what the obstacles, weather, or route, we get your goods from here to there.' I snort as I realise, 'Communication is **not two**-way. It is a **one**-way process.' A one-way process **twice**, fraught with difficulty. You need to deliver the goods. And the person being communicated with needs to confirm that they're the right goods. But even the journey

back is just as difficult. In everyday life this is bad enough but in projects where things only happen once, and are not repeated day-in day-out, **it is essential to get that one-way trip right each and every time.**

As I pull into the car park, I feel quite good about my reasoning, although it is clear that I still have some way to go to work out how communication fits into the picture. It certainly is very important but now I suspect that communication is not *the* only key.

## CHAPTER 5: BEWARE ANTS

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*In which the challenge of new world change is discussed*

It's a magnificent sight, St Tropez harbour. So blue in the bright sunlight, which makes the white and black and blue yachts and speedboats glow vividly even through my very dark glasses. The range of boats is staggering from the low graceful sloops with their triangular sails to modern ocean-going yachts, several floors high. These floating tower blocks are designed to look as if travelling forward at a tremendous rate of knots even when stationary.

Ours is modest. It looks stationary when it is. It had been Franck's idea. It was to make up for rushing off before our meal two days previously. I had explained to him that I was certain that my meagre finances would not stand any major expense but he assured me that he had a good friend, a 'brain mate' as he described her, who owned a small yacht which he was sure we could borrow. The idea was to make the crossing to the small Island of Hyeres. We were then planning to climb to the top of the mountain and picnic.

Now we sit at the top of the hill, watching the boats below us carry out a complex waltz. In the sunshine it is hot but up here on the hill the blustery wind keeps us cool. Franck takes a red and white tablecloth out of the basket and spreads it on the grass. He then empties out the contents of the picnic basket onto it. When he's finished setting out our lunch, he sits down, pours out two glasses of wine, turns to me and asks, 'Well?'

'Yes,' I reply, 'very well indeed.' I smile broadly and say 'Excellent. In fact, I am superb.' I grin. I misunderstand his question on purpose. He knows how impatient I am and thinks that I'll not wish to lose time at all in resuming our discussion. Then I say, 'I must confess that I'm surprised that you're interested in the topic.'

He turns away from me. A second passes, then he stares back at me and says, as if he is about to offer me the challenge of a lifetime, 'Look at this,' he holds up a pot of low-fat prune yoghurt. 'Think back to when you were a kid and imagine yourself in a supermarket.' I nod, listening intently. He continues in a firm voice, 'What flavours of yoghurt were there?'

I'm not sure if he seriously wants me to answer and I hesitate. He keeps looking at me with the little white pot held up at eye level and I realise that he is serious. I don't understand the mismatch between his serious expression and this trivial question. I smile with relief and reply, 'That's easy, not very many, probably just plain and strawberry.'

'OK, now imagine yourself in a supermarket today, in the yoghurt section. What flavours are there?'

'I can't tell you that,' I retort, 'there are hundreds, thousands of them, and there are different types; French set, Greek, thick, live!'

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My arms circle in the air to illustrate the endless ranges.

He continues calmly, 'And tell me what always happens when you finally find one that you really like, say rhubarb, kipper and walnut flavour.'

'They change it or withdraw it.' I say resignedly.

'My grand-dad used to complain about change. All these "new-fangled" things that keep coming along. That said he taught me to ride a bike which, once upon a time, must have been a new-fangled idea.' He chuckles.

'I guess if you're born into it, you don't notice the change.'

'**Life is all change these days,**' states Franck. 'A lot of it almost invisible *alteration*. Every update on every app on your phone will probably change your behavior, change the time it takes to do what you did before or cause you to choose between two ways of doing things. I think *change itself has changed*. We used to expect *step changes*. *In many organisations the day job has become the change job*. We've gone from doing the same stuff over and over with yesterday, today and tomorrow being almost identical to most of the work today being about making tomorrow different. Unfortunately, most people didn't sign up for that, aren't trained or geared up to respond.'

I nod in agreement. 'Even with breakthrough technological change, computers were invented decades years ago. It's just they keep getting smaller, more powerful and better connected.'

Franck continues talking softly as if speaking to himself. 'I once watched a TED talk on

worldaftermidnight.com which explained how-and-why the way the world functions is different from what we think it is. The **new world**, today, largely looks unchanged from the **old world** 'before midnight' as it was called in the talk, but all the rules and formulae which govern our world have been rewritten. A bit like moving from water into wine,' he says smiling as he tops up his glass with water and mine with wine. 'Both are liquid but they are not the same.'

I lean forward, pick up my glass and take a sip. 'I don't know about you, but I can't remember the last time I met anyone from **any** organisation which is not *actively pursuing change*. Businesses, banks, governments, hospitals **all** seem to be trying to **change** things.'

'Yes', he replies quickly, 'and since *communications are now fast, global, relatively cheap and accurate*, customers and competitors world-wide hear of what they are up to. The competitors react by starting their own changes and the customers react by raising their expectations and being continually dissatisfied with anything they are offered. At the same time *most goods and services are having to rely on more technologies, skills and knowledge to get produced and sold*. And now with the #covid kickstart, the tentacles of change have spread well beyond business or government.' Franck pauses in his monologue, looks out over the shimmering sea again and then he uses it. That tone again, the one which had struck me, the muted megaphone, to say, '**These days, for most people, life is all change.**' He mumbles, 'And not always of their own choosing.'

I reflect for a long second and challenge, 'But,' I say 'you mentioned that your grandfather

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had thought the same. I can't see how this differs.'

'Remember the yoghurt?'

'Yes?' I reply questioningly.

Then at speed, and without appearing to take a breath he says, 'Imagine that the packaging has been changed. Doesn't the impact of that work its way down the chain to the printer who could be anywhere in the world? And then to the person who supplies the ink, who could also be anywhere in the world, who is instantly emailed to cancel the orders. The cancellation works its way down the chain, to the company which supplies the raw materials for the ink, who see the demand for their product fall and so launch a sales push which soon gets their competitors anywhere in the world to launch their own.' He delivers this at a fast pace. 'And because the packaging was changed you didn't recognise it and so didn't buy your favourite yoghurt, so somewhere out in the North Sea a fisherman has a wasted kipper catch which gets thrown back, adding to pollution at the same time. Because the fisherman didn't sell the catch, he goes bankrupt, so he goes home to Iceland angry and beats his children. The children get taken into care and so the national budget is overspent so the country quickly has to increase its borrowings. Interest rates change in America as a result and the stock market in Hong Kong moves.' Franck grins broadly.

I recover well from his machine gun delivery. 'You are trying to explain that the world is less predictable, more complex and change occurs at a faster pace.'

'It's more fragmented and surprising. I'm trying to learn, as you are, and I'm interested in

the most effective ways of managing parcels or 'chunks' of change.'

I nod vigorously with an expression on my face that shows I recognise the challenge.

'For many centuries, since before the building of the pyramids, we've coordinated and managed changes of one sort or another. We call these chunks of change, 'projects'. We invented methods for planning. Those projects usually had a fully dedicated team. Think of the early movies in Hollywood where everyone would lose their job at the end of the project.'

My ears perk up as I've never thought of making films as projects.

'Also, the goals and the underlying situation didn't alter much during the project itself.' Sending a man to the moon, for example, the moon orbits pretty predictably and the funding from the government was steady. Even so the success rate was about a quarter.'

'That's about the same as today,' I respond. 'About a quarter work as originally envisioned; about a quarter fail pretty early on, about a quarter are what I call 'vamprojects'. Simply put, projects that suck the lifeblood out of you. And another quarter are 'projectgeists' that, like poltergeists, hang about smelling bad, spooking people, never delivering anything useful and never going away!'

Franks laughs loud and energetically, throwing his head back in appreciation. The sound lightens the mood of our conversation. 'These days there are so many approaches. They range from Hackathons to Agile to Waterfall Rapid Application development, PMI Extreme Programming, Parallel Development, Deep Dives

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and even Design Thinking! And yet,' he says, 'And yet,' he repeats, 'the success rate hasn't increased significantly. Why?'

I shake my head silently. I have no idea why the new methods are having no effect. I venture, 'Could it be something to do with the complex interconnections and the world changing faster?'

'Yes', he responds solemnly, 'the world around the projects is complex and changing almost as much as the changes the projects are supposed to deliver. Even the teams are rarely fully dedicated to just one thing. And I suspect that tried and tested methods are no longer appropriate for all the situations we face. And I know how enthusiastic new converts to every fashionable new method get, in applying their new methods, so I'll bet that the new methods are being applied even where they are not relevant. That means that instead of helping, the new methods make things worse!'

I'm silent, considering his summary.

'I'll tell you a rather grim story,' he begins. 'In trying to make sense of change, I interviewed the directors of a mining company just after they had just sunk the deepest mineshaft in the world and found the gold they were after! That is no mean feat.' he emphasizes. 'As the interview progressed, I wondered why they were not as euphoric as I thought they should be, so I asked. The CEO replied. "Yeah, sure we hit all the milestones and delivered on budget, but we're devastated by the loss-rate." Loss-rate? I asked, "Yes." they replied glumly. We had a couple of accidents and lost some people!'"

'That is grim.' I comment.

'Yes, indeed, and now they get little enthusiasm from their staff for their latest plans.'

'No wonder' I reply unsurprised.

'With typical Aussie black humour, they called the attitude, gruesomely, DBS, standing for **Dead-Body-Syndrome.**'

I grin tightly.

'It seems to me,' he continues, 'that you can focus on the **task**, in which case you'll deliver a bright, shiny goal but probably leave a trail of 'dead bodies' behind you. Or you can focus on the **people** and have them engaged, and motivated, but meanwhile, the task sits in the corner, a hot, steaming pile!'

I chuckle. 'It would be dumb to not focus on either and get a trail of misery and a steaming pile!'

'Correct. You need to focus on both, but if you focus too much, too early on the task, you hit a brick wall. Once you've alienated the people, you can't raise them from the dead.'

I nod, smiling and thinking that his point is so true.

'Correct,' says Franck. 'I think **the most important message in delivering change is that to deliver both, you must manage the people to manage the task—never manage the task directly, only manage it through engaged people!!**'

I nod, enlightened. 'Is that why you were giving me such a hard time on my theories of why projects went awry? Were you trying to make sure my thinking was straight? Ow!'

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I jump straight up feeling a hot pain in my backside. And another sharp pain in my ankle.

Then Franck leaps up brushing his legs actively as if he has red ants in his pants. Which he does. And so do I. He points frantically at the public picnic area 300metres away. We are hopping and flapping as we try to work out what to pick up first, how hard to shake, who is to take what. My flipflops are covered in ants. I decide to leave them for now. We scramble and decamp to an ant-free zone. As we recover and catch our breaths.

‘That was lucky.’

‘Lucky?’ I say bewildered.

‘Yes, lucky. For most organisations when they have to change, they don’t have so much luck. They just bumble along, happily doing what made them successful in the past though it no longer works! We luckily had all the ingredients we needed. *The red ants told us clearly **Why change** was required and needed now - we literally couldn’t stay where we were. We knew **What** was to be **changed** and what is to be left the same. There was no point in trying to rescue the jam. We could literally see **What** we needed to **change to** - we could see the public picnic area. And it was clear **Who** is going to have to **change** - us and not the red ants. Finally, we figured out **How** to carry out the change and **sustained** it until we reached an acceptable result.*

‘What?’ I exclaim puzzled.

‘Imagine you’ve been tasked with some change in your organisation. You know you have a one-in-four chance at most of coming away

covered in glory. Imagine the goal isn’t as clear as ours was. How are you feeling?’

‘A bit nervous, I guess.’

‘And now imagine that you aren’t sure how it is all going to come together. You know lots about the change but not so much about who it will affect and if they will have to do things differently for the success to be declared. Now tell me how you are feeling?’

‘Well if you put it that way, I guess I’d be feeling very tentative about doing anything. The numbers are stacked against me. It doesn’t look like I’m going to come out of it well.’

‘And imagine that the scope of the change is unclear and there are not only some structural challenges, such as a new piece of software to overcome but also your project has some horribly complex politics to navigate.’

I’m starting to see his point. I’m starting to see why people are so reluctant to do anything. I nod slowly.

‘And,’ he says in a deep bass tone, ‘in our complex, confusing world sometimes the red ants are biting someone else so you don’t take notice and don’t care. Often, they are biting you but you are so distracted by advertisements, shiny attractive toys, political fears, comparisons with other people and all the time-stealers you experience that you focus on stuff irrelevant to your success, that you don’t notice or respond.’ He grins.

‘Franck is spot on,’ I think as I rub the painful bumps on my arm, we’d been lucky. Most people who face the need to change lack all the ingredients and are not so lucky, they simply fail.

## CHAPTER 6: BUBBLE N°1 LEARNING TO LEARN

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### *In which the position of communication is explored*

‘Look,’ he says, and points to a boat which looks as if it has dropped its anchor about a mile offshore. There seem to be people standing on a low platform on the end of the boat. ‘Divers.’

‘There is a wreck out there. The thing with wrecks is that they stick strictly to Murphy’s Law.’ He turns towards me. ‘Once sunk they seek out the deepest part of the surrounding seabed and wedge themselves in as deep as they can go. Even when the average depth is a few feet, any wreck in the area is bound to be at least a hundred feet down. When they are really deep, you can only get down to them with the aid of compressed air and sometimes it takes several dives to unearth all the secrets. You and I have probably got enough time this afternoon for one good dive to the bottom.’

I look at him puzzled and ask, ‘What do you mean? I’m not a very good swimmer.’

‘No’. He laughs. ‘Not in the sea.’ He giggles his shoulders shaking, ‘I mean dipping into your problem with projects.’

‘Well,’ I say, ‘I’ve been doing some more thinking and I figure that communication has a lot to do with it. I can’t work out why it didn’t come up the last time we spoke.’

‘Didn’t it?’ He smiles that smile of his again and says, ‘I don’t really recall,’ and reaches into his pocket. He pulls out the napkin he’d been scribbling on last time and smooths it out on the

top of the picnic basket. ‘You’re right,’ he says, ‘it’s not on the napkin. Why do you think it should have been?’

‘Because most people will say of their problems that they are *all down to poor communication*’. I know it is important but I can’t work out where it fits in’.

‘Well let’s test this out. Why is the project not timely or why isn’t the money going to be right or why doesn’t it do what we expected it to?’

‘Because there is poor communication?’ I venture.

‘That is a bit of a leap of faith. I’d love to see you sell that to your angel investor.’ He then begins to act out, on his own, an interview with an angel investor. He is playing both parts.

He starts off as the angel investor. He crosses his arms and then looks up as if someone has entered the room. He then smiles and waves expansively to a non-existent empty chair, and says, in a nasal Californian drawl, ‘Do sit down. What can I do for you?’

He shifts his position to face the place where he had been sitting as the bank manager, hunches his shoulders, trying to look intimidated, and says in a trembling high-pitched voice, ‘My project is late, overspent and not delivering the goods and I’d like to borrow £100,000 to improve my communications.’

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He is the investor again. 'Could you please show me your business plan, to help me understand how the one thing leads to another? In what specific way will the fact that everyone knowing what everyone else is doing solve your problems with incorrect initial estimates or an impossible specification? Will it stop all errors being made?'

He moves round again, starts to wring his hands, looks up timidly and says, 'Well no, not really, but *everyone knows that it's all down to communication.*'

He stops acting and looks at me. 'Do you get the money?'

'What do you think?'

He sticks out his lower lip, frowns slightly and shakes his head slowly from side to side.

'I see your point,' I say grudgingly 'but the visible and invisible teams could be demotivated because of poor communication, couldn't they?'

'Have you ever seen a situation where the project team was de-motivated and yet there was good communication?'

'Yes.' I say, remembering my thoughts of earlier that afternoon. 'So, what you are saying is it's only in some situations that poor communication is a cause of team problems and in others it is not.'

'Let's work on the general case for projects first and build some patterns. Then we can look at specific cases. Who knows, communication might be part of the solution.' Franck looks back at the napkin and says, 'If I remember rightly there were two ways to measure project success. One was to do with the actual content

of the project, its timeliness, financial contribution and the specific technical and business objectives that it was set up for.'

'Correct'. I respond.

'The other way to measure success was with...'. His voice tails away, leaving me to fill the gap.

'The stakeholders?' I venture.

'Yes, the stakeholders! Those who hold a stake. The Visible and Invisible teams involved in its execution, and the stakeholders interested, primarily, in the outcome.'

'The sponsor, end users and client stakeholders.'

'The **outcome** stakeholders!' he says, and then fixing me with his eagle look again he states, 'As long as you provide results. Is it fast as they need, good as they want and cheap as they want to pay? I don't believe that in any project it is possible to end up with dissatisfied outcome stakeholders if you deliver the tangible results, they said they wanted. How could that possibly happen?'

'But it does happen,' I insist. 'I've seen it many times. I've lost future business or further phases of project work to competitors before now. More than once, would you believe? The final end user has refused to take advantage of the outcome of the project, 'rubbishing' it and being disparaging about the benefits and sometimes even sabotaging the project, just so that they can say, 'I told you that it was no good.' And I'll tell you why too!' I say, the pitch of my voice rising several octaves, 'It's because *the outcome stakeholders never know what they want until it's impossible to give it to them!*'

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‘But don’t they tell you fairly early on in the project what outcomes they expect?’

‘Yes, they do, but they don’t understand all the problems that I face and anyway they always each want an outcome which is different to everyone else’s.’

‘So, what do you do if this is the case? That they don’t understand what they want or agree with each other.’

‘I ignore them and hope that they will go away so that I can get on.’ I reply sheepishly. Franck is giving me that fixed look again.

‘So, you can’t really succeed.’

‘Yes, I can,’ I insist, ‘I’ve had several successful projects.’

‘Have all your stakeholders agreed that they were successful?’ He presses me for an answer.

‘No.’ I protest, ‘But that is impossible.’

‘What did we decide we meant by a *successful project*?’ he demands.

I know that he’s got me, so I don’t answer, but I know he is right. ***Project success is and can only be defined by the stakeholders.***

‘So, one reason that you’ve lost future business or upset your sponsor or failed to gain the ownership of the outcome by the end users, is that you haven’t managed them during the project,’ he states seriously. ‘You’ll have problems if you tend not to manage your stakeholders.’

‘Well, I’d like to manage all my outcome stakeholders, but if you’ve never run a project, you don’t realise how much there is to be done.’

I’m too busy to spend time trying to match up their whims. In fact, I would often go out of my way to do as much as possible to keep the outcome stakeholders out of the action during the project.’ I look at him and confide, ‘It’s the only way that you can really get on with things.’

‘But tell me, don’t they come back and bite you eventually, insisting on what they would have asked for earlier if you had given them the chance? And, isn’t it worse for you when they finally get their say, later rather than sooner? Doesn’t this mess up your half-complete plans even more than it would have had you not ignored them?’

Franck is being totally annoying. In theory he’s right, of course, but how could he understand? This is the *real* world we were talking about. A world with fourteen hour working days and eight-day weeks. How could I possibly find the time? I figure that being a teacher he doesn’t really understand the pressures of real life. My mental state of mind must have been mirrored in the way in which I was vigorously applying my Roquefort to my baguette because Franck asks, ‘When you are leading a project do you find that you get very busy?’

I stare at him in disbelief. Now I know that he is living in a different world. ‘Are you kidding?’ I say, ‘It’s all go, non-stop, sixteen-hour days, rush, rush, rush, no holidays for months. You’re worn out but you keep driving, keep pushing, the adrenaline keeps you going.’

‘What exactly are you doing?’ he asks.

I spread my arms wide as a reply. ‘Everything!’ I exclaim.

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‘So you work **alone** on your projects, then?’

‘No!’ I shake my head. ‘You don’t understand. I am a project leader; I always have a team.’

‘So how come you have to do everything?’

‘I don’t really have to do everything. But I do need to be involved. It’s the only way I can keep up to date.’ I insist.

‘If you were right, then this Google would not exist.’

‘Huh?’

‘You said that the only way to keep on top of things is to be involved. Every day, hundreds of millions of people keep up to date with the world’s events without having to be personally involved in everything.’

‘But I find it easiest to work out what is going on when I’m involved.’

‘So what you are telling me is that, one of the main reasons that you find yourself immersed up to your elbows in hands-on activities, is because **you can only learn first-hand about what is going on around you.**’

I shrug my shoulders, ‘Sure! That’s how it is in the real world. That’s how I am, there is nothing I can do about it.’

Franck smiles broadly and announces, ‘At last the wreck has been found!’

I look over the bay, I squint and reach for my sunglasses. My eyes pan across the whole bay but I cannot see the boat with the diving platform. I turn to Franck and say, ‘Where has the boat gone?’

‘What boat?’

‘The one with the divers, you said that the wreck had been found.’

‘Oh! I was talking about *your* wreck. I meant that we had found **one** of the underlying reasons for your problems with projects.’

‘When?’ I ask, confused. ‘I mean, how?’

He points to the crumpled napkin and says, ‘Do you remember that you told me that you often find that the client or end user claims that their requirements have not been met?’ He points at the bubble which says this.

I nod in agreement, ‘Yes. I do.’

‘You told me that you have difficulty in learning about things unless you are personally involved.’

I nod, and wonder where this conversation is leading.

He continues, ‘That will give you two problems. The first will occur when you receive the briefings about the project. You hear what they say, but in your mind, you instantly try to relate what they are saying to previous projects you’ve been involved in, accepting the parts which look or sound familiar and simply ignoring the bits that don’t fit. You don’t do this maliciously. It’s quite simply that not having been involved in the problem that gave rise to the solution, the need for change, the change that the project is supposed to provide, the nuances and complexity, don’t mean much to you.’

‘Go on.’

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‘What that means is that you may start a project without fully learning what your outcome stakeholders, and especially your client, actually wants.’

‘How do you know this?’

‘Do you ever find that after you’ve started, the goals feel less clear than they did at the start?’

‘Mm, sometimes.’

‘And do you ever find that you can carry on for a long time without feeling the need to review your goals?’

‘Well, yes, but I’ve a lot of experience and I usually know what I want.’

‘I know, but we have already agreed that what **you** want may not be what the outcome stakeholders want, even at the outset.’ He is writing on the napkin again. ‘If you are not reviewing your goals, you will often find yourself wrong-footed and, with infrequent reviews of the overall purpose, you may find it difficult to catch up or change your plans.’

I have to agree. I hated that experience, which tended to happen about 90 percent of the way through the project when, usually in an ad-hoc meeting or in an email which you just happen to see, you discover that the stakeholders see a major problem and the terrible thing is that you know that you have not got enough time to put it right.

Franck carries on, he notices my bobbing head and assumes that I am with him. ‘I said that there were two problems arising from your method of learning: the second is that you will almost certainly be dragged into “hands-on” activities and decisions. This is one of the reasons why you are so heavily overworked. Being overworked you will have little opportunity to manage the client. So the client will have *little opportunity to participate in the project as it proceeds*. Add this to *your lack of clarity about the project goals and the difficulties of catching up once things go wrong and you can see that it is **almost inevitable that your outcome stakeholders’ needs will not be met.***’

I sit there speechless. I feel the hairs on the back of my neck. I know he’s right.

‘I always thought that learning was about something which happened in school, but I guess that I must be unrealistic if I think that I can handle projects, projects which are **always** something new, without learning all that there is to know about them, **both** before and during them. And learning not just from being there but also from other people’s experiences and knowledge. I need to relearn how to learn.’

Franck grins at me and I smile back. He says, ‘One down.’ And then noticing that the sun is starting to set. ‘Quick, there are no lights on the boat, we must get back before it gets dark.’

## CHAPTER 7: BUBBLE N<sup>o</sup>2 RECOGNISING STAKEHOLDERS

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### *In which the Laws of Change are explained*

It's hot and what is making me feel exhausted is Emily, Franck's daughter, energetically running backwards and forwards along the beach. She started this a while ago and now the pace is faster. An hour and a half ago the tide had been out and it seemed a natural challenge for a nine-year-old, to build a sea wall of sand to keep the sea out. Armed with a long-handled spade, she had quickly dug a trench along the beach six inches wide. The sand it had produced had been neatly stacked up as a formidable sea wall. The wall rises majestically upward a full four inches high. Encouraged by early success, the wall had grown in length and now extended seven metres in both directions, a magnificent sight. It was decorated, in parts, with seashells and round pebbles. It is amazing what hard work and a readily moldable material can produce.

The reason that she is running, East to West and then back East, is that, with the incoming tide, the sea is constantly trying to breach the barrier. The main problem is that each wave attacks a different part of the wall. Emily is continually carrying out repairs on the structure. The repair sites, however, keep shifting.

I look up at the sound of a Kawasaki Sea scooter being ridden near the shore. The sound is loud, perhaps louder than normal, because Franck, who is lying on his side with his head on

the picnic basket, stirs. He sits up and rubs his eyes, 'Bloody marvellous.'

'Fantastic,' I agree, 'did you have a good sleep then?'

'Yes. I did. Sorry, but I think I nodded off in the middle of you telling me something very interesting.'

I think to myself, 'But not interesting enough,' but instead I say, 'That's all right. It's too hot to think, let alone discuss anything serious.' I had been expounding my latest theory on why change is so difficult to manage.

I'm sitting next to a rock pool. As I'm trying to think of something to say next, I notice that the surface of the pool is perfectly still, like a polished mirror. I reach across, pick up a pebble and I idly drop it in the water. I watch as the ripples move outwards from where the pebble was and reach the surrounding rock and then bounce back in together. As the ripples meet each other, the simple circular symmetrical pattern is broken and it becomes a furrowed, undulating surface. It looks regular, more like a miniature, moving mountain range. I smile. So simple and yet so perfect. The energy from the falling pebble is systematically and gently dispersed in the water.

Franck leans over to see what I'm up to. The surface is calm now. To demonstrate what I did before, I drop another pebble into the middle of

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the pond. The ripples spread slowly and symmetrically. I hear his voice over my shoulder say, **'One Change Leads to Another.** Franck's First Law of Change.'

'Oh. So you're building a theory then?'

He says nothing, just smiles back.

I challenge, 'So what's Franck's Second Law then?'

In typical Franck fashion, he still says nothing, but reaches past me and grabs a handful of pebbles. He fixes me with his eagle eye stare and demands, 'Guess!' First, he drops a single pebble into the pond. Then he flings half the handful of pebbles into the pond. There are several loud splashes. Drops of sea water rise into the air and fall back in causing further ripples. He waits about a second and then throws in half of what he has left and then a second later he chucks in the remaining pebbles. His demonstration started with a symmetrical pattern but after the first pebble the surface of the water has been a confused boiling. There has been no pattern at all. No clear ripples. There are even air bubbles and patches of foam on the surface. With his third throw a crab that had been sheltering under a small rock decides it is all too much and darts across the pond to take refuge under a larger rock.

'Well?'

I shrug, 'More pebbles make a bigger splash?'

'Not bad but not right.'

I venture cautiously, 'Don't throw all your pebbles in at once?'

'Definitely no! What did you actually observe?'

'You threw in your pebbles in four lots.'

'No. In the pond. Can you describe the pattern of ripples?'

'There was no pattern!' I exclaim. 'How could I possibly describe it?'

'Precisely! Congratulations. You've worked out Franck's second law!'

'Huh?'

'If one change leads to another and a lot of changes are happening together it becomes increasingly difficult to predict what will happen next. **Adding Change to Change Creates Chaos.**'

I recognise this instantly. In my last two years at Infotech Solutions the directors had kicked off a large number of initiatives. Initiatives on quality, cost reduction, customer focus, efficiency skills development, competences, benchmarking and many others too numerous to list. Each initiative impacted on the others. Usually one initiative would change the goal posts of another. Sometimes they would compete for resources or management time. You never knew where the next thunderbolt would come from. One week we contacted one of our major customers six times! Six independent phone callers none of whom knew that the others were making calls, including two aggressive calls and one who slammed the phone down on the customer. In the end we had to give away a £50,000 piece of equipment to pacify him. An expensive surprise.

I nod slowly, 'Yes, you're right. Running a project in an organisation which is undergoing a

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lot of change is a real nightmare. Hey, these are good.’ I say, referring to his laws which seem to work.

Emily is standing still. She seems to be looking at two boys. The boys look roughly the same age as she is. It seems that in her enthusiasm to develop the wall she has extended it too far. She has encroached on their patch. True, their patch is badly defined, Mum and Dad lying in the shade of a pink beach umbrella a few metres from the shore. Picnic gear strewn haphazardly in the space between, a dismal-looking sand castle or is it just a pile of sand, and a one-foot-deep crater dug out by hand? Watching them at a distance, barely being able to hear what is being said, is fascinating. I remember my own childhood. As I think of myself as a nine-year-old boy I can guess exactly what is going on and what is being said, even though I can only hear some of what is being said. They seem unhappy about a girl who is doing something that they themselves had not thought of doing. You can tell that each boy wishes that he had thought of it first. You can tell from the nervous movements, shifting their weight from one leg to another that, now they have become used to the idea, it looks good fun. You can tell that they would love to join in but can’t because it is a girl’s idea and must therefore be a ‘girlie’ thing to do. Furthermore, they don’t like the idea of her building her wall on their patch even if it is a good idea. Emily backs down. After all, she has got enough work to do maintaining the existing wall. The extension seemed the right thing to do to make the wall complete. But it wasn’t worth arguing over.

‘What an amazing coincidence, the third law in practice.’

‘Where?’ I ask.

‘There.’ He points at the two boys who are still standing in the same place watching Emily return to work.

‘What? You mean Emily trying to complete her wall, being prevented by two boys who are being territorial and anyway wish that they had thought up the idea first and won’t play because they didn’t?’

‘Precisely! You really are getting good at working these laws out.’

I warm to the compliment and then realise that I’m not actually sure that I have really worked out the law. I clear my throat and ask ‘How, er, do you phrase the law formally? I mean, I can’t really say to people, “Beware of little boys who won’t let little girls play on their patch or play with them because the game wasn’t their idea” can I?’

Franck tilts his head back and lets out a guffaw. **‘People Create Change – People Constrain Change.’**

Of course put that way it was so obvious. Why hadn’t I spotted it before? I had constantly done both. Suggestions and schemes put forward in meetings would get a thumbs down even if it was obvious that they were the right way to go. Three months later they were brought back out into the sunlight, blinking, but by now it was the group’s idea or the idea of the only person who had opposed it most strongly. Of course – the age-old trick of getting your boss to go along with something you want to do by trying to get the boss to think that it was his idea.

‘Do you have any more laws that you could tell me?’

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Franck replies cryptically, 'Yes and no. Yes, I do and no I can't tell you!'

'Why not?'

'Because you can observe a lot just by watching.'

I follow his gaze. He is looking away from the rock pool and out towards the sea. Out at sea there are a few people swimming, one couple playing water polo. The chap on the sea scooter has just fallen off and is trying to re-mount his machine. Is that it? 'Change makes you fall off your perch?' I don't think so, it doesn't seem profound enough. I look further out, a few boats, one with a sail. In the foreground Emily is darting backwards and forwards more hurriedly than she had been earlier. I look back at the sail boat. The wind is blowing along the coast and they are having to tack to it. In order to keep parallel with the coast, they must be travelling in a zig-zag fashion. 'That's it,' I think and I say out loud, 'Go with the flow.'

'What?' It's Franck's turn to be confused.

'The sailing boat. Go with the flow.'

'How can you read its name at this distance?'

I laugh, amused at the fact that he has completely misunderstood me. 'Now I come to think of it, with a project, success means changing things. You can't succeed if you go with the flow. Going with the flow means *you* change nothing. I give up.' I say shrugging my shoulders.

'Watch Emily,' he instructs.

By now she is darting backwards and forwards along her sea bank, even more furiously than before, mending the breaches in

the wall, which each successive wave brought. No sooner has she finished rebuilding one section, then another section, ten feet away, is washed away. As the tide rises higher, the damage caused by each successive wave grows worse. There is more repair work to be done. Furthermore, with the long, twenty-foot stretch of the wall, there was a good chance that up to three waves will strike along its length simultaneously. This is why, what had started out as a leisurely, fun activity, had changed into a frantic race against tide.

'Tell me what is happening,' he demands. 'What two facts of reality are inter-playing?'

I think for a while and then say, 'The wall is too long.'

'Yes, in this world you avoid large single changes, ***problems are diverse and inexhaustible, the opportunities for change are infinite.***'

'Emily can only work on one bit at a time.'

'Yes, ***an individual's ability is bounded and has an end, there is certainly a limit to what you can do.*** And what is the effect of the interplay of these two facts of reality?'

As I struggle to come up with an answer, I look across at her and see that Emily's growing tired and now after each repair, she looks both right and left to assess both how far away the damage is and how bad it is. She does this to give her the best chance of maximum repair with minimum distance travelled.

My mind is letting me down. As I try to work out the answer to Franck's question, all that comes up into it is a series of old proverbs; 'A stitch in time saves nine', 'Better to be hung as a

## ALL CHANGE!

sheep than as a lamb', 'Nothing ventured nothing gained'. And then it starts to cough up strap lines from advertisements - '... reaches the parts other beers can't', 'Just do it'. I'm starting to feel a failure when I notice that Emily has abandoned the bulk of the wall and is simply concentrating on a small section. The section that was most heavily adorned with shells and pebbles. In fact, she is having great success at reinforcing and building up that section. The section is now eight inches high and horse shoe shaped. But the best bit of all is that she is smiling and laughing now.

The sight of Emily gives me inspiration. I venture, 'Is it something about defining the boundaries of change which will allow you to succeed?'

'Very good. ***If you try to range over infinite change and problems with limited resources and ability, your judgement will be biased and your spirit will end up exhausted. Definitely, Accomplished Change is Change Chosen and Carried out Carefully. Or to make it more memorable: "Chunk it or Junk it!"***

Franck has done it again. Starting off a project which is too ambitious or not ambitious enough, generally leads to the same thing, dissatisfaction. I can see his point but by now I know how Franck works. He never says anything these days without a reason. I ask, 'Why are you telling me this. I can't see what it has to do with my problem with projects.' He reaches across to the picnic basket and pulls out a napkin. I recognise it instantly. By now it is becoming an old friend. Creased and crumpled, it looks like an old wise man who has seen all that the world has to offer. He smooths it out with his left hand.

'Let's see... We never found out the underlying causes for this one.' His index finger is pointing at the bubble which said *lost business/unhappy sponsor*.

'Well, one reason is that the end users complain bitterly, to either the client or sponsor, about the delivered project. Another is that the sponsor and client react badly to surprises which you give them.'

'One at a time please. Remember the method we used before? Why don't you start with the first one, your reason to do with the end user.'

'The end users start to complain as soon as they discover that some of the output of the project is not to make their lives easier. If anything, it makes them even more hassled.'

'What? You do projects which make the business worse?'

'Well, I don't. Not really. In a few cases the project outcome is actually worse than the conditions preceding the project. Usually the real problem is that the users expect much more than they receive.'

'A mismatch between expectations?'

'That's right. Often you can deliver something which is more than adequate for the business needs but if the users have somehow got the idea that it is going to sing, dance and make pizzas, it will not be seen as success. If the client or sponsor hears the complaints, their view of project success becomes tainted.'

'What was your second reason?'

## ALL CHANGE!

‘Well I think that I’ve described an aspect of it. The client and sponsor tend to be really touchy. They tend to be touchy and get upset so easily if they discover something that they didn’t know about in advance. They...’

Franck looks at his watch and then slaps his palm to his forehead and says, ‘Shit a brick! There has been a change of plans, I have to get back to my *mas* by five. I’m afraid that I won’t be able to give you a lift back to your apartment. Sorry, I arranged it this morning. I...’

I’m pretty fed up. Franck’s holiday *mas* is about twelve miles inland close to the village of *La Garde Freinet*. I know that it will take him about half an hour to get back and it’s four thirty. He will have to leave at once if he is to make his appointment. ‘You could have said earlier, then we could have fetched my hire car,’ I splutter.

Franck is smiling at me as if he has a private joke. It doesn’t feel funny to me though. Visions of me taking an expensive taxi ride are passing through my mind and I’m starting to worry if I have enough cash to pay for it. The more worried I look, the broader his smile gets. Finally, I demand, ‘What’s so funny?’

‘*Don’t be so touchy, you get upset so easily.*’

He is quoting what I said earlier, back to me. Now he is giggling uncontrollably. ‘You should see your face!’ he says pointing at me.

It slowly dawns on me that I’m having my leg pulled. ‘Nice one, but couldn’t you just have told me that no one likes surprises and that it is *my* fault and *not theirs*?’

‘I don’t think that it would have had the same impact somehow.’

‘Well, this is the last time I accept a lift from you and become completely dependent on you!’

‘I suspect that that is exactly how your stakeholders feel about you. That’s how they feel if you fail to keep them up to date.’

‘OK, OK, you win.’

‘No. I don’t. I don’t win. Not until you tell me why the end-users become disappointed and why your other stakeholders find themselves surprised.’

I think for a second and then remember that we have already agreed that I tend not to manage the client. Mainly this is because I am usually overworked. I remind Franck of our previous conversation. He agrees but asks, ‘Is there anything else?’

I pause for a while and then say, ‘Well, to be honest I hadn’t really understood what managing the stakeholders is about. I thought that you were making a fuss over the idea of stakeholders and that it was all a bit academic. I now realise that since people constrain and create change, stakeholders are actually the source of *both* the hard success criteria *and* the soft ones. The need to meet certain financial targets or timeliness or a specific business outcome is driven by the vision of someone, some stakeholder.’

‘And?’

‘Since one change leads to another, the conditions in a project are bound to change from day to day. I need to be *capable of matching their expectations to what I am doing throughout the project, every day, on a day-to-day basis*. I’ve tended to assume that as long as they knew at the beginning what was supposed

## ALL CHANGE!

to be happening, I didn't really need to influence their views during the project. In some cases I've actively avoided telling them anything at all.'

Franck nods. 'You will have unhappy stakeholders if you don't keep them up-to-date during the project and make sure reality matches their expectations. It's just like balancing stones on scales - you don't need to know the individual weights of the stones on either side, **just get them even, that's all.**'

As I think about what Franck has just said, an image starts to form in my mind, a terrifying image, an image of me seated at an untidy desk. There are two laptops and a tablet on the desk. The laptop is partly covered by a huge toppling stack of yellow post-it notes. There is a tablet on the desk and I have my elbows on the desk talking into two phones at once. I'm making phone calls to everyone in the company and writing endless texts and messages explaining how late everything is getting, and it's getting later because I don't have time to do anything except keep everyone in balance.

'Great theory! But how can I manage everyone in the organisation at once?'

Franck doesn't seem to have heard me. He is intently watching Emily. Her sea wall has been converted into a sand castle. The castle is almost three feet high and has ramparts and turrets (all bucket shaped). Although the castle structure is much more grand than the sea wall was and contains much more sand, Emily doesn't seem to be rushing about as much as she had been earlier.

She spends some time working on the castle itself and then collects a bucket of sand and dumps it at the base and smooths it out. The sea

level has risen quite a bit and the waves are lapping at the base washing away the sand but she is actually depositing the sand **before** it needs repair. She eliminates the problem before it arises. '*Preliminates*' the problem. 'Is that a real word?' I wonder idly. I suppose that makes sense; if she waited until there was significant damage by the more vigorous waves at the base, the side wall of the castle would also collapse and she would have to repair not only the base but the side of the castle as well. She goes back to work on the castle itself for a few seconds and then notices that the sand around one of the sides has been worn away by the **last** wave so she stops to fix it. Watching her, I notice that she has also dug two moat-like channels up each side. But instead of simply making the moat run around the castle, she has used the channels to **divert** the flow of waves up the beach, where the water can soak away gently without doing any damage to the castle. As we watch Franck asks 'Do you see a pattern?'

I start to describe what she is doing.

Work on castle...

Reinforce base in anticipation...

Work on castle...

Check for repairs...

Work on castle...

Reinforce base in anticipation...

Work on castle...

Clear channels to divert waves...

Work on castle...

Reinforce base in anticipation...

Work on castle.

'Clever girl, she seems to have herself well organised.'

## ALL CHANGE!

‘Is that all?’

‘And the castle is growing more and more splendid,’ I add. ‘Anyway you’re just trying to dodge my question. I asked you earlier, how can I possibly manage everyone in the organisation at once?’

‘What was the fourth law of change?’

I try to remember, ‘The strapline is easy to remember, “**Chunk it or Junk it!**” but I have to guess at the full statement. Was it, “**Accomplished Change is Change Chosen and Carried out Carefully?**” Franck nods slowly, as if he is hearing this law for the first time and is himself trying to make sense of it.

‘What does that have to do with managing everyone in the organisation? It’s a great idea but totally impractical. When I am running a project all I need to do is to receive my briefing and I’m away. Being able to run with whatever you’re given is the mark of an effective proj...’

‘Who provides the brief?’ He interrupts rudely.

‘The sponsor or client.’

‘Don’t you think anyone else should be consulted or involved when you are formulating your brief?’

‘No. The sponsor or client owns the project so it should be up to them to decide what the brief should be and how ...’

‘Number two!’

I stare. I’m starting to get irritated at being constantly interrupted. Franck is holding up two fingers. He twists his wrist to make a victory sign.

‘If you do not identify all the stakeholders up front and use them to help you define what *they* think the brief is, let them define what is to be delivered and how it is to be done and hence be in a position to understand resource needs and their contribution and rewards from the project, it is almost impossible to balance their expectations and your outputs later.’

‘Slow down,’ I plead.

‘In choosing your change carefully, you must spend time working out who the stakeholders are. They define for you the boundaries and organisation of your ‘**chunk of change**’. Watch.’ Franck reaches into the picnic basket and pulls out a straw then he leans past me and floats it across the closest corner of the pool. It comes to rest against two rocks but forming a rough triangle. He then scoops up a handful of pebbles in his left hand and a single pebble in his right hand. As before, he starts to throw the pebbles into the pool. He aims at the main part of the pool, not the sectioned off part. As before, the surface of the main pool becomes choppy and frothy. The surface of the part of the pool cut off by the straw remains motionless. Franck then slowly raises his right hand and with a flourish of ceremony, drops a single pebble onto its calm surface. In contrast to the main pool, a regular ring of ripples forms and runs outwards.

I begin to understand. ‘*My stakeholders give me the best chance of succeeding, in spite of all four laws.*’ My stakeholders determine my sectioned off part of the whole pool. *If I fail to **identify my stakeholders at the start** and make sure that they stay in place **throughout** the project, I cannot guarantee success since outside change can easily enter my part of the pool and produce unpredictable results.*

## ALL CHANGE!

I'm beginning to roll now, the ideas coming thick and fast. I remember Emily's wall. She could make little progress until she carefully chose the boundaries around the change which she wanted to carry out. 'You need to know all your stakeholders at the start, to get an understanding of the nature and size of your "chunk of change."' I continue to use Emily's construction work as an analogy to help me think. I remember Franck instructing me to work out the pattern she used for protecting and developing the castle. And then it comes to me. *'And I don't have to worry about all of them all the time.* Some are key in that they *define* and support the overall "chunk of change"; if you lose their attention or agreement to what you are trying to change, they have a tremendous impact on your progress. You find that you must spend even more time repairing the ill effects. It is best to protect them from any fallout. To balance them, you must get to them **before** there is any trouble. Others you can handle as you go along, as long as you are alert and attentive. You can spot any problems they have from the **last** thing you or someone else did to them, and fix them. Some you simply want to **divert** away from your "chunk of change" because for them, your project is a threat to their status quo. They will *"drive a stake through it if they can".'* I'm quoting from our first conversation and remembering why we called them stakeholders in the first place. I'm feeling quite pleased with myself. It is all starting to make sense.

Franck is nodding in agreement and adds, 'You use your stakeholders to help you to learn why the project is to be done and then separately to understand the idea behind it, the project concept.' I think I am following him as he continues, 'Imagine someone who doesn't

understand stakeholder balancing. At the start they will fail to recognise important stakeholders, such as the boss of a particular specialist whose skills you need. They may approach the specialist and in so doing inadvertently offend the boss. The boss may then put barriers in the way of the specialist contributing to her project. If this happens, then usually an inappropriate team will be formed. It is difficult for an inappropriate team to work without making lots of mistakes or doing the wrong things which then have to be redone. It becomes *almost impossible* for the project to deliver the *specific technical and business objectives it was set up for.*'

I can't argue. It's spot on, but he continues. 'Imagine someone who doesn't understand stakeholder balancing. At the start, they will fail to recognise the sponsor, or other senior managers or the board who have a stake. If they fail to gain senior management commitment at the start, they will find it difficult to get hold of resources. If there is little senior managers' commitment, prospective team members will not think that there are many "brownie points" to be obtained from working on the project. If this happens then it is difficult to get the best people in the organisation to become involved in the project, making the team inappropriate. If there is under-resourcing, then not only will it make it worse for the inappropriate team, they will constantly find themselves battling with all the odds stacked against them. What is even worse is that in addition other stakeholders, such as the finance people, will start to attack the project as it attempts to use resources which it has not been allocated. The direct impact of this will be to *make it difficult to achieve* the *financial contribution* of the project or meet its *timeliness in providing competitive advantage*



### **ALL CHANGE!**

imagine that her nose is a chin, you suddenly see a beautiful young lady instead. For a split second, the power of the revelation is awesome. I look at Franck. He seems relaxed and content. Then we hear Emily. 'Finished! Finished!' She is shouting

triumphantly. She is calling us over to look at her sand castle. We get up and walk towards her. It is a fantastic castle; a real achievement and she is standing proudly beside it, beaming.

ALL CHANGE!

Book Two:

**The**  
**Project Leader's**  
*Secret*  
**Handbook**

## CHAPTER 11: PURPOSE AND TYPE OF CHANGE

*In which you learn the critical skills of go/no go for a project and discover how the project concept determines the skills and tools you will need*

### Purpose: Is it worth doing?

Have you ever thought to yourself during or at the end of a project you have done or that someone else has done, 'What a waste of time'? My bet is that you have. Why does this happen over and over again? My guess is that it happens as a result of three common causes.

- Sometimes you are **firefighting** and the project is not thought through properly. After all, who has time to think when there is a fire raging? So despite your tremendous effort, no sooner have you damped down the flames at the top of the inferno than they are re-lit by the hot ashes underneath.
- Sometimes you actually succeed with the change you were planning but unfortunately the **outcome is not exactly what you wanted**. The result does little to help you towards your original goals. It may instead move you away from them. It may not be adopted by the people who are supposed to live with it.

- Sometimes you actually get it right. You should be delighted, only **someone has moved the goal posts**. The world has changed.

Tell me about the project you are thinking about as you read this book. **Why** is it being done?

The First Law of Change says *one change leads to another*. If that's true, then any change is only to be undertaken under **extreme** need. After all, doing projects for the 'heck of it' is bound to lead to a further need for a response of some sort. And I am sure that you don't want to end up with the chaos suggested by the Second Law of Change: *Adding change to change creates chaos*. A project **must only be undertaken to solve a problem or to take advantage of a real opportunity**. I see you nod. I agree too. But what is a problem? Is a problem simply something that you don't like? I've said it. You've said it, 'I've got a really big problem.'

### A QUICK QUIZ

Which of these is a problem?

1. I'm out of a job again.
2. I'm stuck behind a lorry which is crawling up a steep hill.
3. I've just spent 250 euros on a phone call.
4. I'm sipping a cocktail called Blue Lagoon.

**Answer:** All or none or any.

**A problem is something which gets in the way of achieving your goals.** Since the goals are not specified you can't say which is a problem. This is not a silly semantic argument though. If problems are things that get in the way of achieving your goals, then unless you have goals, you do not have any problems! (And if you don't know what your goals are, then you do not realise all the problems you actually have!)

It is important to define the overall goals. It is from them that you know what problems you actually have. And it's the problems which give rise to the need to manage changes to put them right. (Some people who are more optimistic than I am, prefer the use of the word '*opportunity*' rather than the word '*problem*'. If you are an optimist, read the sentence above as: **An opportunity is a route to achieving your goals.**

---

## ANOTHER QUICK QUIZ

See if you can fill this in over the next three minutes

- a. The goal of my organisation is:
- b. A barrier to reaching the goal (or for you optimists: a route to reach the goal) is:
- c. The "chunk of change" required to overcome this barrier (provide this route) is:
- d. I am certain that this is the **correct** and **minimum** amount of change I need to carry out because...

## Scoring

Per answer

a. 10 points   b. 10 points   c. 10 points   d. 10 points

Subtract ten points for every ten seconds by which you overran the three minutes you had to answer the questions.

Total = \_\_\_\_\_

If you scored less than 10 points you may wish to consider putting your project on hold until you are sure that it is worth doing.

MMM-Rates™

Legitimate?	Complete?
Place your 2 sticky-notes against the outcomes	Who/what needs to be added?
Increase the rate at which money comes/ citizen benefits come in..	Customers/ clients/ consumers
Reduce the rate at which money goes out/ the budget is spent	Channel/partners
Release resources that are/ money that is tied up	Context setters - regulator/ legislation/
Cost effectively deliver a quality response to ensure compliance	Internal departments/ processes
	Suppliers/ contributors/ collaborators
	Power brokers/ vision setters/ policy makers

The PRIMARY objective of my project is to...

The SECONDARY objective of my project is to...

Capture who/ what needs to be added to make your project COMPLETE

SOURCE BOOK/PUBLICATION: Money Making Machine Eddle Obeng

What is to be done?



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Figure 11.1 The Rate of Making Money

The process of making a project complete and legitimate by altering or extending its scope usually highlights additional stakeholders who should be added to your stakeholder maps (see page 141).

Purpose: Making the case for a Project in business terms

**A problem is something which gets in the way of achieving your goals.**

**An opportunity is a route to achieving your goals.**

Both situations suggest a *Gap* - the difference between how things are and how you would like them to be.

*I'm in the board room of an old, traditional, listed company, served by many longstanding employees. However, the market had begun to shift and change fast. Something had to be done about innovation. But these smart and cautious board members were not about to leap into it. After all, how big was the problem? How big was the prize? The whole thing was full of uncertainty. At the time I stood in the board room, the discussions had gone on for nine months without any action or decisiveness.*

*"Can each of you write on a sticky note on how you would describe the difference between how things are and how you would like them to be. I don't want goals or objectives, just a short sentence describing the gap we must leap."*

I collected up the stickies and read each out loud. And then we voted on which resonated with most people. They decided, "Our level of innovation is too low." I placed the sticky in the centre of the large sheet (Figure 11.1).

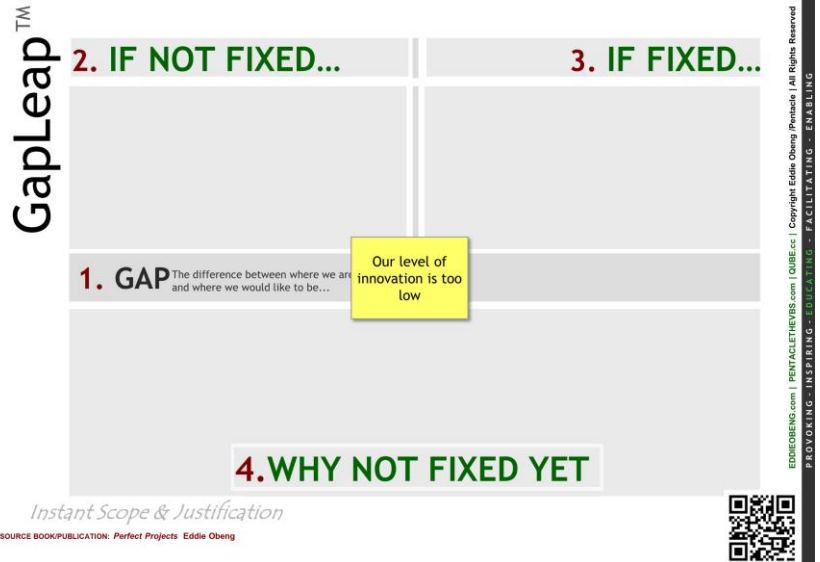


Figure 11.2 GapLeap | Innovation Example *Our Level of Innovation is Too Low*

Then I instructed them to write on ONE sticky the biggest, baddest, worst, concern of what would happen **if we did not fix this gap** (Figure 11.2).

As I collected them back, I read silently and shuffled them around to form a narrative of cause over time.



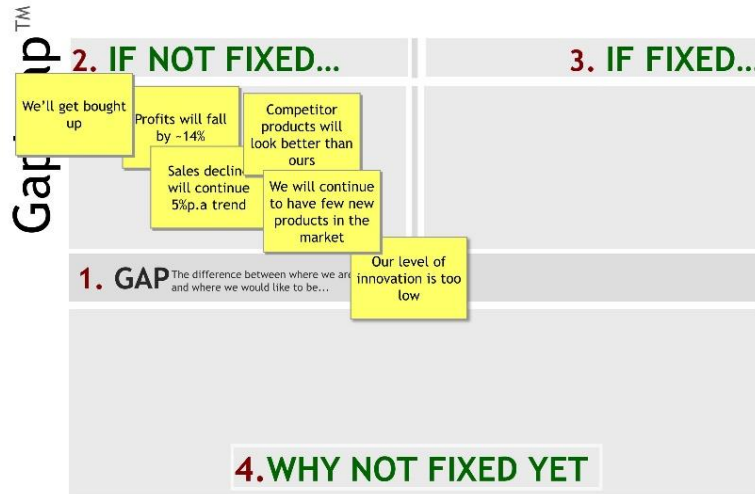
Instant Scope & Justification  
SOURCE BOOK/PUBLICATION: Perfect Projects Eddie Obeng

Figure 11.3 GapLeap | Finding the Gap *Our Biggest, Baddest, Worst Concern*

Then I placed them fanning radially out from the centre, on the sheet, reading them out to tell a story from the stickies.

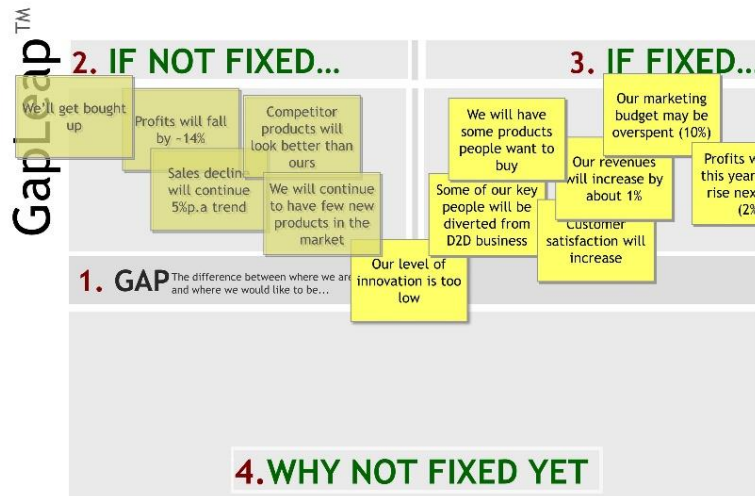
“Our level of innovation is too low. If we don’t fix it, we will continue to have few new products in the market. And that means competitor products will look better than ours. That means if we don’t fix it, our sales decline will continue, making our profits fall and eventually, we’ll get bought up!” (Figure 11.3)

Now I had their attention one hundred percent. Even the cynics and traditionalists perked up. “So now, only one sticky each, tell me what will happen **if we fixed the gap**. And don’t just write the opposite of what you wrote before, be imaginative.” (Figure 11.4)



Instant Scope & Justification  
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Figure 11.4 GapLeap | If Not Fixed Contributions from participants



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Figure 11.5 GapLeap | If Fixed Contributions from participants

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After I'd read what would happen If Fixed, the Chairman commented, "This looks like a very serious issue we've been kicking around like an orphaned football for so long."

I nodded slowly and asked, "So, **why haven't you fixed it yet?**" And as they began to speak, I shook my head and insisted, "One sticky-note per person per point. **ALWAYS WRITE IN SENTENCES.**" (Figure 11.5)

Once those were captured, I asked if they wanted to use a year for their thinking. Next, I pointed at each sticky in turn and asked what the financial impact of each would be. Some were easier to quantify than others. (Figure 11.6)

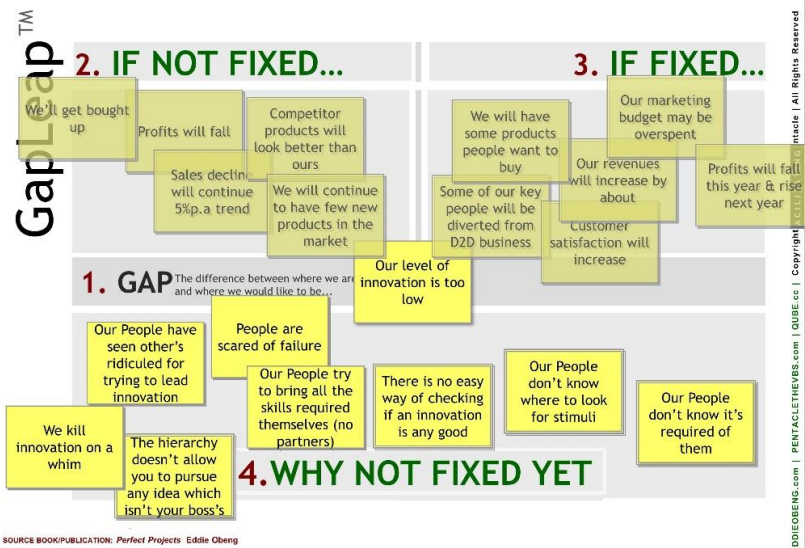


Figure 11.6 GapLeap | Why Not Fixed Yet? Contributions from participants

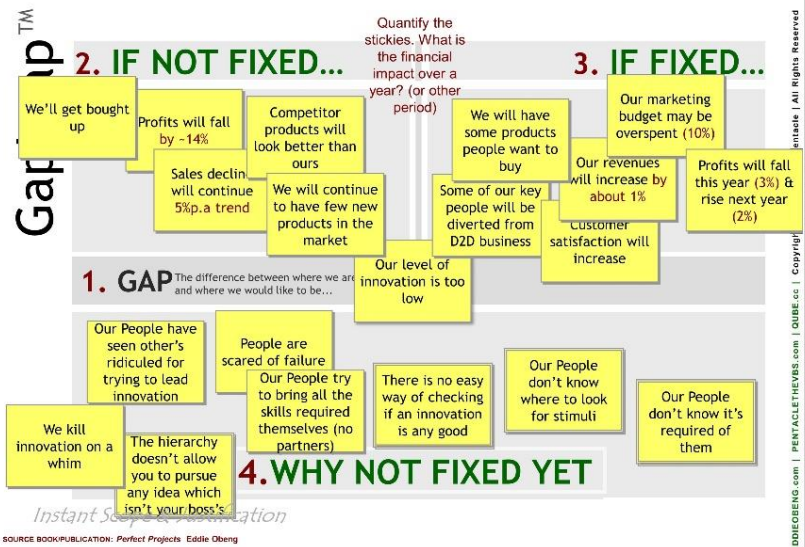


Figure 11.7 GapLeap | Quantify the Stickers

Soon we had established that doing nothing, not fixing the gap would lose us ~£119 million over the next year. Fixing it would lead to a loss of only ~£8.5 million. So the value which would be lost due to inaction, what I call the **Value-At-Stake** was about £110 million.

Then we estimated the costs of sorting out the reasons 'Why Not Fixed Yet'. (Figure 11.7).

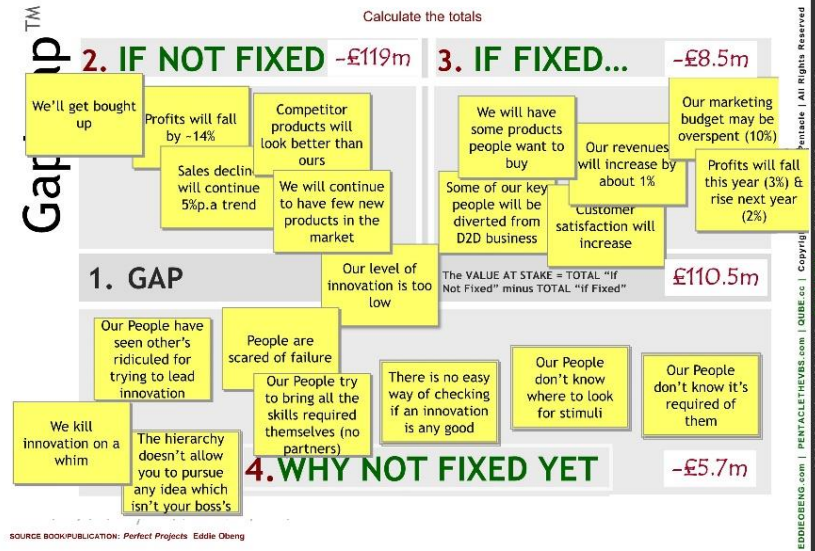


Figure 11.8 GapLeap | Calculate the Totals

At a stretch, the costs came to under £6 million. That was a **payback** of about three weeks! The entire process of the GapLeap had taken just under 14 minutes and yet they had dithered over this for 9 months!

As I was working with the key decision makers, there was no need to prioritise early actions to gain credibility or involvement. We just needed a timeline to the scope of the change required that we had outlined in the, "Why not fixed yet? area.

I took two stickies and read them out. "Which comes first?" I asked, then I picked a third and asked if it came before or after the other two. As I repeated the question, we quickly created a timeline of activities to leap the gap.

Can you **write up the 'Gap' giving rise to your potential or existing project as a clear sentence?** Use one of your stickies. *It is a Gap and NOT a Goal.* For example, "We do not have an easy way to collaborate, include people and be productive in our current world."

Place it in the centre of the GapLeap Performance Enhancement Tool (PET). Now ask yourself, "Looking into the future in our fast-changing world, what will happen **if you don't fix this gap?**" Can you write one stickie per sentence. Once done, place your stickies in the top left quadrant. Try to organise the sticky

notes so that they tell a story as they radiate from the centre.

Repeat this for what the future would look like – **If Fixed.** Now, 'Why it hasn't been fixed yet?'

Select a duration (**1 year**) and for each sticky estimate a financial impact. Calculate the top totals. The left **Downside (D)** and right **Upside (U)**. The difference (**U-D**) is the **Value at Stake (VAS)**. Calculate the totals for the bottom **Cost to Remedy (CTR)**

**Payback** is  $VAS/CTR = ?$  (Figure 11.8)

GAP = The difference between where we are and where we would like to be...

## 2. IF NOT FIXED...

**IMPORTANT**

- Each participant to independently write on sticky notes what they believe will occur if the GAP is *NOT* fixed
- Only use complete sentences (no bullet points are allowed!)
- Once you have posted all the ideas, sequence them from top to bottom so that they 'tell a story' and read them out to the participants

## 3. IF FIXED...

**IMPORTANT**

- Each participant to independently write on sticky notes what they believe will occur if the GAP *IS* fixed
- Only use complete sentences (no bullet points are allowed!)
- Once you have posted all the ideas, sequence them from top to bottom so that they 'tell a story' and read them out to the participants

## 1. GAP

**IMPORTANT**

- Only use complete sentences (no bullet points are allowed!)
- Use a real GAP It should not say for example "We need to..."

**IMPORTANT**

- Each participant independently write on sticky notes, why they believe it has not yet been fixed
- Only use complete sentences
- Post all the ideas, sequence them from left to right so sticky notes with the biggest effect or which will require the least effort to resolve, are further to the left

5. Select an appropriate timescale and assign a Cost or Revenue value to each and every sticky taking care not to double count opposites
6. Calculate the VALUE AT STAKE - which is the absolute difference between the sum of the 'If not fixed' and 'If fixed' sticky notes
7. Compare this value to the cost of fixing the GAP

## 4. WHY NOT FIXED YET



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Figure 11.9 GapLeap | Guidance Notes

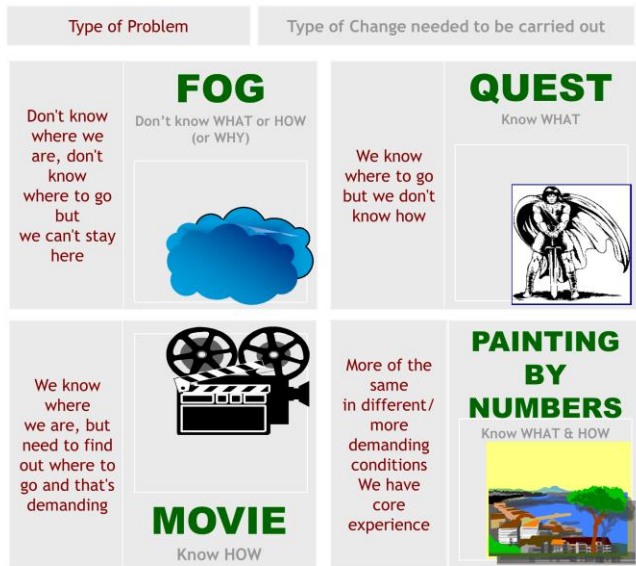
### Purpose: IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL PROJECTS

#### Rules of thumb

1. Plan your project so that you spend money as late as possible but get revenue as early as possible.
2. If your project is addressing a necessary or imposed condition, always do it at minimum cost.
3. Closely manage projects where there is more than a year of spending before revenues come in. Always organise such projects in phases with opt outs. It's best if, at each opt-out, you can retain or gain business benefits.
4. Be very careful with open projects aimed at reducing running costs or investment levels.
5. Legitimate projects usually rely on end users changing their ways of working. It is important to explain legitimacy to end users.
6. If you have a choice of projects, rank them in terms of which of the 'money-making machine' questions they answer.
7. It makes better business sense to kill a project at the start than in the middle!



TypesOfChange™



*In the New World even Change has Changed!*  
SOURCE BOOK/PUBLICATION: All Change! The Project Leader's Secret Handbook Eddie Obeng



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Purpose & Project Type

Figure 11.10 Types of Change | 4 Main Types

Has the symptom check worked?  
Has it established the type of project which you're attempting to manage?

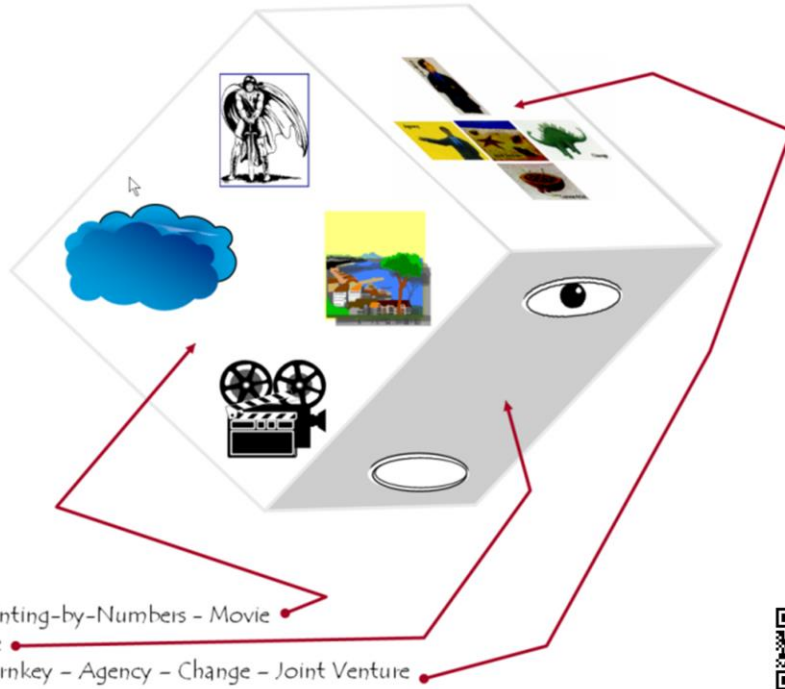
Which type is it?  
Tick the diagram for confirmation.

Purpose: IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL PROJECTS

Special Case:

If your project is so large that if it fails, the whole organisation fails, or it falls directly out of a strategy that your organisation is following, it is known as a **Strategic Project**. Strategic projects have some very different additional characteristics. I've written about them in the book *Putting Strategy to Work*.

Why - What - How  
 Progress Obvious/ Measureable  
 Driving the Change - Delivering the Change



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Figure 11.11 Obeng Project Space | 40 Types *All the critical categories*

**Type of Change: CRYSTAL BALL GAZING**

There is an exercise that I often get my course delegates to carry out which I call 'crystal ball gazing'. It is my attempt to help them get a sense of perspective and to get them into the habits of an 'ideal' person, a person who 'thinks of trouble and prevents it'. I try to get them to realise that once *you understand project types* and can

*predict the problems* then you **do not have to live through the problems.**





I put them in pairs and then I ask them to work out the type characteristics of their own projects. They then write this down on a piece of paper and swap it with their partner. **Without knowing any of the details or content** of the project, the partner then has to guess:

- I. The issues and problems that they have had with the project so far and what was easy to do.
- II. The problems and issues that they currently have and what is going well.
- III. The issues and problems that they are likely to have in the future.

## HOW TO USE THE HANDBOOK READ ME

Recall the project type of your current project and then use the table below to find the best sequence to read and work through the rest of this handbook.

### Best sequence to read and apply this Handbook in:

TYPE OF CHANGE		Read First >>>	Read Second >>>	Read Third >>>	Read Fourth >>>
<b>FOG</b> 	Lost-in-the-Fog	Learning to Learn (Page 117)	Working with and Leading People (Page 196)	Recognising Stakeholders (Page 137)	Planning, Coordinating and Prelimiting Risk (Page 169)
<b>QUEST</b> 	Going-on-a-Quest	Working with and Leading People (Page 196)	Planning, Coordinating and Prelimiting Risk (Page 169)	Recognising Stakeholders (Page 137)	Learning to Learn (Page 117)
 <b>MOVIE</b>	Making-a-Movie	Recognising Stakeholders (Page 137)	Learning to Learn (Page 117)	Working with and Leading People (Page 196)	Planning, Coordinating and Prelimiting Risk (Page 169)
<b>PAINTING BY NUMBERS</b> 	Painting-by-Numbers	Recognising Stakeholders (Page 137)	Planning, Coordinating and Prelimiting Risk (Page 169)	Working with and Leading People (Page 196)	Learning to Learn (Page 117)

## HOW IT ALL FITS TOGETHER

I have arranged the complex pieces you will learn about into a simple diagram. (Figure 11.12).

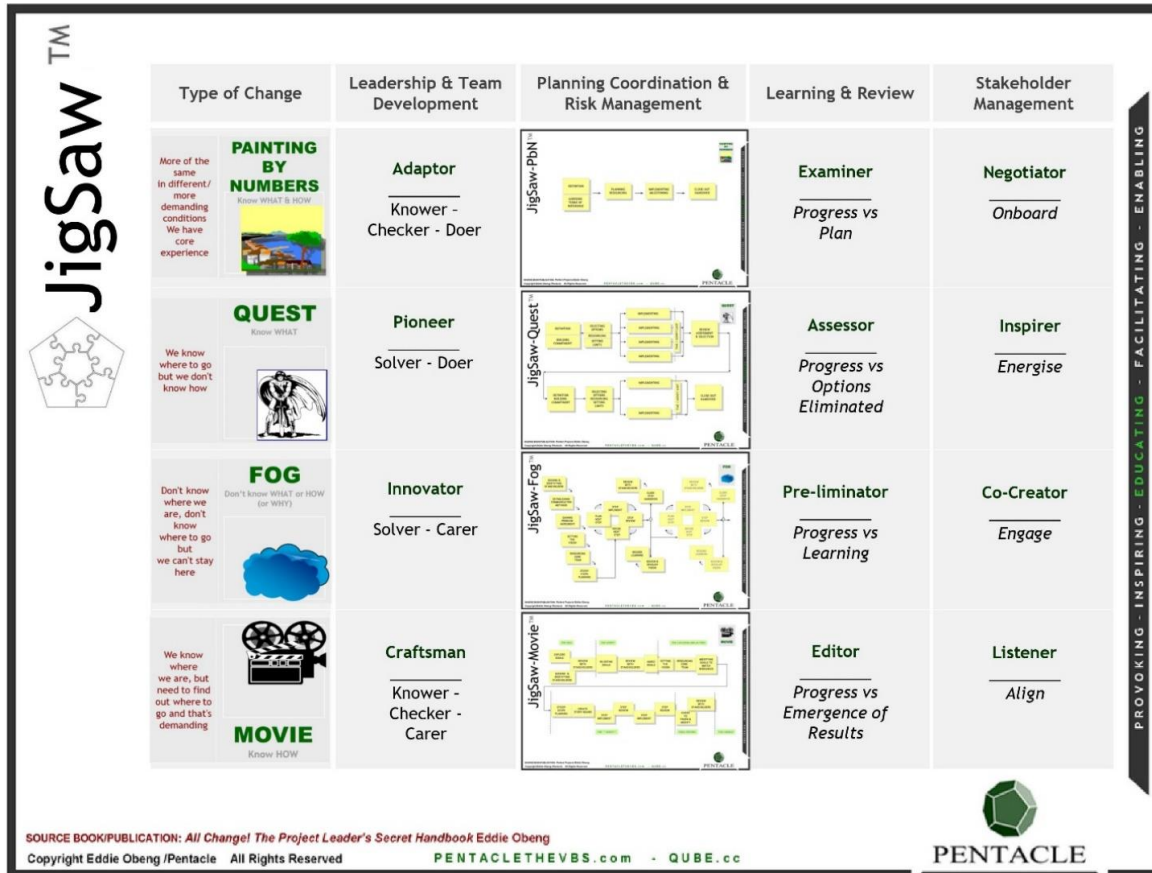


Figure 11.13 JigSaw | For ALL Project Types *How to Deliver All Types of Project*

How do you chunk up change? How do you chunk up projects? Ever driven past a service station with a sign outside, "Now FULLY Open?" Or past a development, "3 apartments of 10 available for sale NOW"? These are everyday examples of **Chunked-Up projects**. In the slow pace and certainty of our Old World, if you decided on a change, you would put **effort** into executing the entire change. And then, if you were lucky, the **benefits** would flow. Imagine it like digging a hole down, then getting a long ladder to climb back out. Or on a timeline a deep 'V' shape.

But in our New World of uncertainty and fast change, hoped for V's become 'L' shapes as you languish at the bottom. **Effort without Benefit. Disaster!**

So to get earlier returns, reduce complexity and avoid risk we build the service station loos and pumps THEN the shopping area THEN the Motel THEN the play area.

Why? Because by **chunking** up by smallest Effort THEN biggest Benefit THEN smallish Effort THEN biggish Benefit... Create a timeline like a lower case 'w'.

Agile methods boast they achieve deliverables earlier. But *Chunking* delivers them just as soon and without the scope creep and wasted effort of an Agile approach.

Now Chunk up your real-life project – Identify deliverables of high value to outcome stakeholders, easy deliverables... Not *phases* or *workstreams* which are just different ways of describing *Effort* activities.

Purpose & Project Type

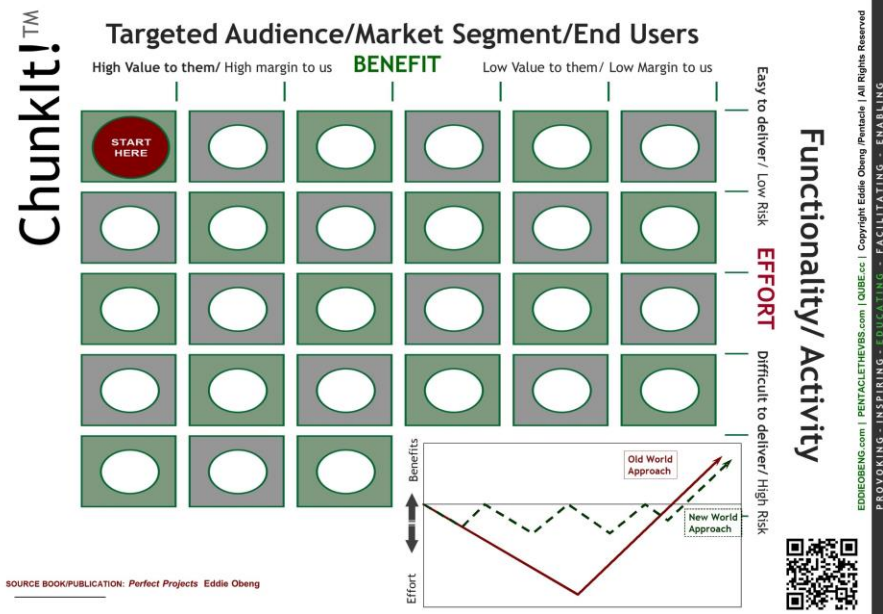


Figure 14.5 ChunkIt | Effort versus Benefit *Resizing Projects for Success*

**Planning, Coordinating and Preliminating Risks: StickySteps: A Step-by-Step Approach to Planning Change**

What is the true nature of planning? By now, you will agree that planning has nothing to do with time schedules or bar charts. Those simply represent the ways in which we communicate the plan. Planning can be little more than the process of gaining and maintaining perspective. If *accomplished change is change chosen carefully*, then we need ways to choose our change carefully. I want you to think, to concentrate on the few barriers which, if you chose and get over them, will mean that you have accomplished your change. How can we find these barriers in a fog?

The only way I know to plan for all types of projects; Lost-in-the-Fog, Going-on-a-Quest,

I was once approached by a delegate on one of my courses. He looked extremely anxious. 'My boss,' he said, 'has told me that I am to install accelerated Digital Transformation for Remote Engagement in our business. He sees this as my major goal and wants me to drop everything and get on with it.'

*'I see,' I replied. 'Well, what's the problem?'*

*'I haven't got the faintest idea what he wants. I tried to ask him but I soon realised that he doesn't have much of a clue either and I've never run a project before. What do I do?'*

*It sounded to me like he was in a bit of a fog. 'What did you say that he had asked you to do?' I questioned.*

*'Install accelerated Digital Transformation,' he said, flatly.*

*'What MUST you have done in order to have "Installed accelerated Digital Transformation"?' I asked.*

*'Found out what on earth it is!' came back the bemused answer.*

*'Anything else?' I pressed.*

Making-a-Movie or indeed Painting-by-Numbers, is to use *Perspective*. Imagine that you were at the end of a long journey in which your project had been completed. Look back at it and describe what you did.

The **StickySteps** approach works in this way. It allows you to look backwards, going from a completed Herculean task, to tiny little steps. I invented this method because I could not find any other way of planning **Lost-in-the-Fog**-type projects. The name comes from the fact that you use Post-it/Sticky/QUBE notes as the main kit.

*'No.' He replied. 'No, that will do just for starters.' I kept probing. 'And what MUST you have done in order to have "Found out what on earth it is"?''*

*'I guess,' he said, 'that I could look it up on DuckDuckGo.'*

*'Anything else?' I asked.*

*'I could find out if there are any tutors who know about it.'*

*'Anything else you MUST have done?'*

*'I could ask you.'*

*I smiled and replied. 'I know, but I'll only talk to you after you have done some homework of your own.'*

*We seemed to have gone from something nebulous, a "chunk of change" too large to comprehend, to something which he could go away and do.*

## THE PROJECT LEADER'S SECRET HANDBOOK

*The next day, he came back.*

*'I've made some progress but I'm stuck again.'*

*'What are you stuck on?'*

*'I now know what the words mean but I still need to work out exactly what to do.'*

*'Do you still have the same objective?' I asked.*

*'Yes-ish.'*

*'Yes-ish?'*

*'Well,' he replied thoughtfully, 'I now think that the objective is actually not to do with jargon at all. It is really to develop new ways in which to work together across the organisation.'*

*'So **in order to have** "developed new ways in which to work together across the organisation" **you MUST have ...?**' I let it hang in the air. 'What **MUST you have done?**'*

*There was a short pause, after which he replied, 'Found out which processes we currently have, and established if they are good or bad.'*

*'Anything else?'*

*'Brought my boss up to speed.'*

*'So, what else **MUST you have done in order to have** "found out which processes we currently run and established if they are good or bad".'*

*'Brought my colleagues up to speed.'*

I took his hand, and shook it warmly and said, 'Good luck!'

Remember the story of the board meeting business-case-in-14-minutes from Planning and Coordination (Page 97) ... The story continues (Figure 14.6: StickySteps).

*'Anything else?'*

*'Not for now,' he replied.*

*'So **what MUST you have done to have** "found out what processes you currently have and established if they are good or bad"?''*

*'Attended a seminar.'*

*I frowned. 'That doesn't quite fit with the sentence, does it? Just say it to yourself out loud.'*

*'OK. If you insist. In order to have "found out what processes I currently have and established if they are good or bad, I would have had to have attended a seminar." You're right, it doesn't fit.'*

*'It might have fitted with the earlier sentence, when you were trying to install something, you didn't understand, but it doesn't here. Let's start again.' I suggest. 'In order to have "found out which processes we currently run and established if they are good or bad" **we MUST have...?**'*

*'Followed through the business to establish the chains of activities we routinely carry out.'*

*'Anything else?'*

*'Recorded them,' he said.*

*'Anything else?'*

*'Discussed them with the people involved in them.'*

IN ORDER TO HAVE ... (First word is a VERB)

Created an easy way of checking if an innovation is any good

WE MUST HAVE... (First word is a VERB)

Complete the sentence  
Sequence\* the Sticky Notes  
Break down each level until you reach tasks  
Mark the task 'T'

\* Sequence:  
1. Earlyish → lateish - normal  
2. Easy → hard - credibility  
3. Engaging key stakeholders → mixed- involvement

*Planning without terror*



Figure 14.6 StickySteps | Innovation Example (Follows on from GapLeap example page 101)

"So," I ask, "Would you like to know how long it will take to leap your gap?"

Heads nod. The CEO says, "That would be helpful."

And I add, "And would it be useful to decide which of us we will rely on, count on, to get the activities done?"

There is a slight nervousness as people sense the possibility of more work coming their way.

"Ok." I say, "This was the first sticky in our scope of actions from the bottom of the GapLeap." I read out the sticky note which says, 'There is no easy way of checking if an innovation is any good.' I ask, "How would you phrase the opposite of this note? By opposite I mean a sentence which would neutralize this? And start your sentence with a verb in the past-tense."

Someone pipes up "Created an easy way for checking if an innovation is any good." I write it on a new sticky.

"Now" I say, "Imagine it's a while from now, maybe months, maybe years. And we have succeeded in 'Creating an easy way of checking if an innovation is any good,' How are you feeling?"

"Pleased!" "Great!" "And now we are reflecting and reminiscing on all the activity we needed to get to that point of contentedness."

"Start to remember the actions we MUST have taken." And with that I put the sticky on the board.

"So in order to have 'Created an easy way of checking if an innovation is any good', we must have, and please complete the sentence; start your contribution again with a verb, a doing world in the past-tense." (Figure 14.7)

Gaining Perspective

**IN ORDER TO HAVE ...** (First word is a VERB)

**WE MUST HAVE...** (First word is a VERB)

Created an easy way of checking if an innovation is any good

Worked out our criteria for a good innovation

Found a way to make the criteria readily available

Trained up/ informed people on how to use the checks

Reviewed what made a good innovation in the past

Established the nature/ scale required to meet strategy

\* Sequence:  
 1. Earlyish → lateish - normal  
 2. Easy → hard - credibility  
 3. Engaging key stakeholders → mixed- involvement

*Planning without terror*



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Planning, Coordination & Risk  
 Prelimination

Figure 14.7 StickySteps | Creating Steps *Not a brainstorm. Only capture 'MUSTS'*

**THE PROJECT LEADER'S SECRET HANDBOOK**

"Again, as all the key influencers are in the room, shall we just organise our 'MUSTS' along a timeline?". They nod in agreement.

I place one sticky and pick up a second and ask, "Does this happen BEFORE or AFTER?"

There is a unanimous, "AFTER."

"Great." I respond. Then I repeat the process with the next sticky. In no time we have a sequence. (Figure 14.8)

Planning, Coordination & Risk Prelimination

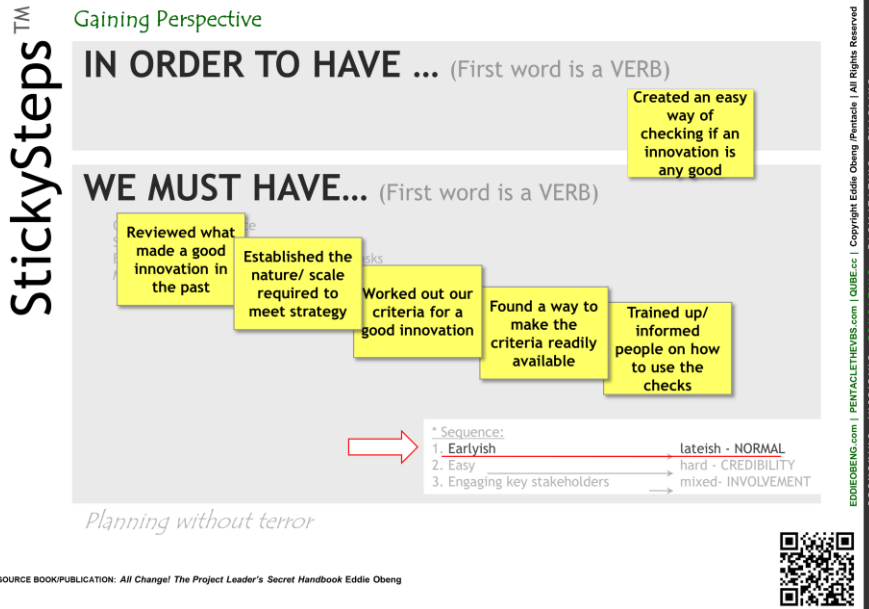


Figure 14.8 StickySteps | Sequence the Steps

I move all but the first in the sequence to the bottom right-hand corner, slide the first one to the box marked in 'Order to have...' and intone. So, in

order to have, 'Reviewed what made a good innovation in the past' we must have...' (Figure 14.9)

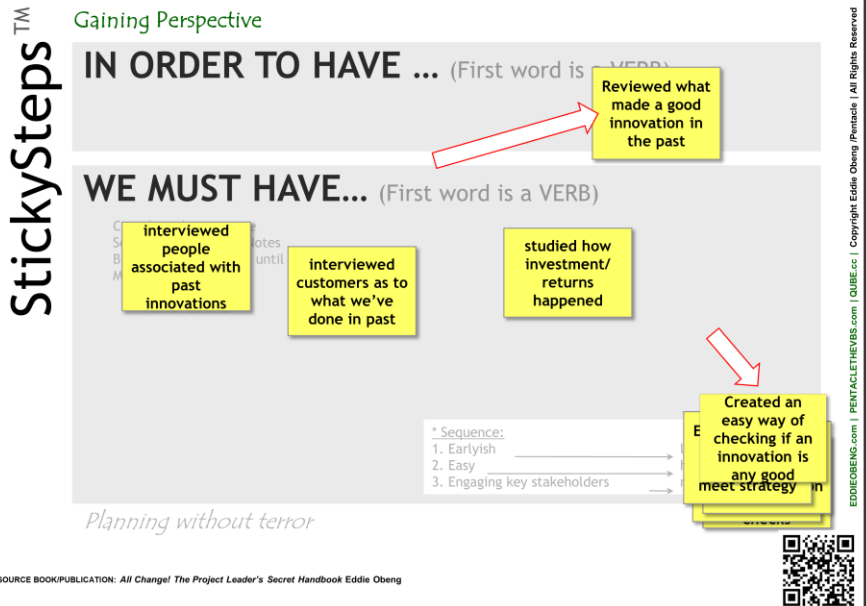


Figure 14.9 StickySteps | Step Downwards *Create smaller steps from big steps*

*Three stickies emerge. They are actions which are concrete and can be delivered without further breaking down; tasks in other words.*

*I slip the stickies onto a second sheet titled 'Scheduling' (Figure 14.10).*

*We decide the first three tasks will happen before we have 'Established the nature and scale required to meet strategy'. So we lay out the possible timeline.*

*Then we return to the GapLeap and work on the second, third and other sticky notes. In about 20 minutes we have a full schedule.*

Purpose & Project Type

StickySteps™

Scheduling

Week 1  
NOW

interviewed ppl associated with past innovation [T]<Alex>

Week 2

interviewed customers as to what we've done in past [T] <Brian>

Reviewed what made a good innovation in the past

studied how investment/ returns happened [T] <Charli>

Week 3-4

Established the nature/ scale required to meet strategy

Worked out our criteria for a good innovation

Month 2

SOON

Found a way to make the criteria readily available

Month 3

Trained up/ informed people on how to use the checks

Arrangement:

Just get on with it! [T for Task] <Name> or colour code

Just get on with it! [T for Task] <Name> or colour code

Quarter 2

Created an easy way of checking if an innovation is any good

Q 3-4

Yr 2

LATER

Planning without terror

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Figure 14.10 StickySteps | Make a Timeline *The schedule is non-linear. More detail early*

STICKYSTEPS™

Part One: Working out the steps

- STEP 1 INVITE THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO PART ONE GAINING PERSPECTIVE... REMIND THEM TO BRING THEIR DIARIES.
- STEP 2 CARRY OUT PART ONE OF THE STICKYSTEPS WITH THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS (FIGURE 14.11).
- STEP 3 SCHEDULE AND GET PEOPLE TO CAPTURE THEIR ACCOUNTABILITIES AND TIME LINES IN THEIR DIARIES (FIGURE 14.12)

Gaining Perspective

**4. IN ORDER TO HAVE ...** (First word is a VERB)

**IMPORTANT**

1. Discuss and agree the outcome required before you start
2. Have one co-ordinator to avoid duplication
3. Start each post it with a verb (doing word) in the past tense

**5. WE MUST HAVE...** (First word is a VERB)

Complete the sentence  
 'Sequence' the Sticky Notes  
 Break down each level until you reach tasks  
 Mark the task 'T'

**IMPORTANT**

6. Complete the sentence and only write down activities you **MUST** have done and make sure that they fit with the sentence
7. Repeat this to identify 5 - 10 direct pre-requisites. Remember to start each post it with a verb (doing word) in the past tense
8. Put the sticky notes in a sequence running:

*Early-ish to Late-ish (normal)*  
*Easy to Hard (to build your confidence)*  
*Engage key stakeholders first (to get their attention before you do to much work)*  
*Pick low hanging fruit first (to convince people of progress - not a safe move)*

7. Break down the 1 -5 sticky notes at the start of the sequence until you reach tasks by again asking, "In order to have..." "We must have..."
8. Mark tasks which emerge with a 'T'

*Planning without terror*

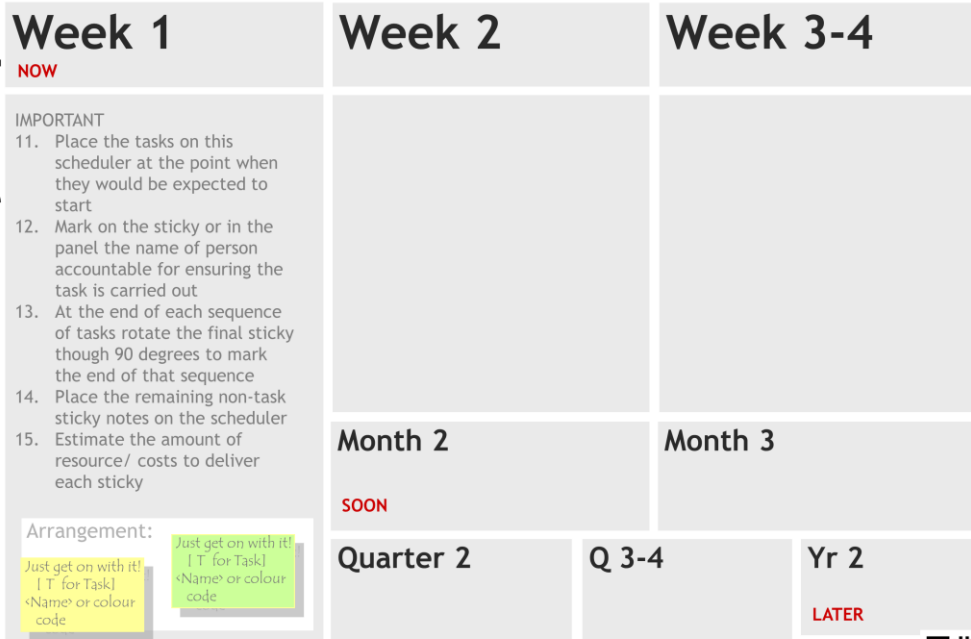
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Figure 14.11 StickySteps | Plan without Terror

Stickysteps™

Scheduling



*Planning without terror*

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Figure 14.12 StickySteps | Scheduling

**Planning, Coordinating and Preliminating Risks: Control and Risk.**

*In America, any boy may become president and I guess it's just one of the risks he takes.* Adlai Stevenson

Book Three:

**Perfect Projects -  
The Philosophy  
& Practice  
of Delivering  
ZERO-Defect Projects**

## CHAPTER 16: ALL JOINED UP

*In which the importance of integrating all change in an organisation is discussed.*

Now it's eighteen months later. We sit in the same Italian restaurant but this time in a less jubilant mood. I should be delighted because of the success we've had. We've been educating organisations on change. It's like a superpower. Once they understand, they get fired up and make things happen.

There is a proverb on our home page (Figure 16.1). We borrowed it from a late-night discussion I'd once had with Franck. Over the past year and a half almost every one of our new clients have forcefully stated that this proverb was the reason that they pursued and bought our education services.

It's a pretty popular and well-loved proverb about fishing. Franck had added a few lines of his own.

### Original Proverb:

*Give a man a fish and he feeds for a day.  
Teach a man to fish and he feeds for a lifetime*

### Proverb Updated by Franck for our fast-changing, complex World-After-Midnight:

*Teach a man how to learn how to fish ...and he may also learn how to hunt, farm, produce works of art or cook.*

*Teach a man how to teach others to learn how to fish ...and you feed all the villages and change the world.*

But first, **IMAGINE A FISH.**

### Learn2Transform

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MENU 

Original Proverb:

*Give a man a fish and he feeds  
for a day  
Teach a man to fish and he  
feeds for a lifetime*

### Education for Change Ltd.

Version for a complex, fast-changing, new world:

*Teach a man how to  
learn how to fish  
...and he may also  
learn how to hunt,  
farm, produce works  
of art or cook.*

*Teach a man how to  
teach others to  
learn how to fish  
...and you feed all  
the villages and  
change the world.*



But first, **IMAGINE A FISH**

EDUCATION INSPIRATION MOTIVATION

ABOUT & TWEETS BOOKS CLIENTS CONTACT |

© 2023

Figure 16.1 Imagine a Fish - Susan Obeng  
*Virtually Matisse*

## PERFECT PROJECTS

There are two types of potential buyers. One set are like *customers*, they know what they are shopping for. They have decided the **solution**. “We need a 2-day course on scoping...”. As you investigate, you realise they have it all wrong. Of course they do. Their skill is in banking, manufacturing, insurance or something else and not in diagnosing learning needs on projects. But if you tell them they have misdiagnosed their needs, they hear, ‘Please just go somewhere else!’ and do. If you are to stand any chance of actually helping them, you have to first say ‘yes’ and do as asked. Then, once confidence is gained from delivering what they want, as opposed to what they need, you can persuade about a third of them to do what will actually bring benefit!

We were lucky. Three quarters of our buyers did not turn up with their ill-conceived **solutions**. They turned out to be real **clients**, with their **problems**, like gifts.

With clients, together we worked our way through five distinct stages. The structure gave them freedom allowing to withdraw at any stage, we would let them get to know and trust us through **engagement**, then we would **diagnose** the overall opportunity and challenge together. Then we would **design** the learning intervention. Together we would **implement** it.

And then we would poke them in the ribs until they removed metrics and cultural aspects

that prevented repetition or added recognition or culture to ensure the change was **embedded**. Through this process of **learning to transform** we learnt what worked in practice and what was most effective, really fast. It was easy for everyone to remember the acronym the five stages spelt out

*Engage Diagnose Design Implement Embed.*

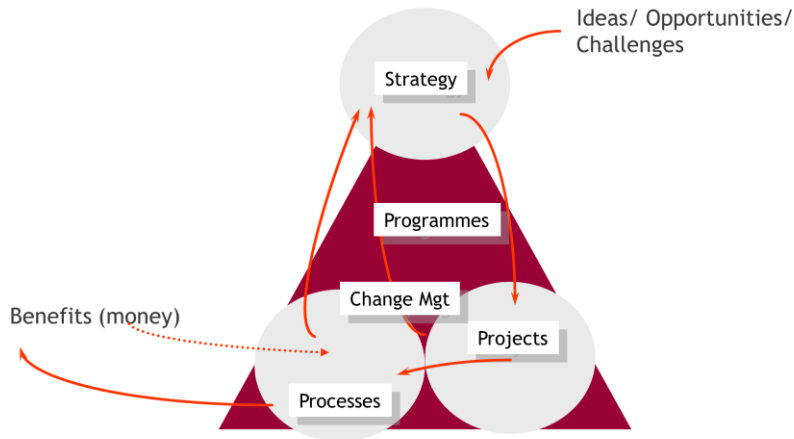
As client assignment after assignment succeeded, bringing us deeper understanding, I’d turned to Franck who had guided us to pull together all the learning we had into a model we all referred to as, “**Integrated Change Management**”.

The idea was simple. Franck had got us to imagine what the CEO would want if they could imagine a coherent enterprise in a changing world. So, instead of treating strategy, day-to-day processes, projects, programs and cultural and change management as separate challenges, we’ve joined them all up.

Now, between Cathy and me, on the table, lies a pile of sheets of paper covered with definitions and rows of bullet points. The top sheet has a clear image, a simple triangle covered with circles and writing (Figure 16.2).

# INTEGRATED CHANGE MANAGEMENT

SD+CM+PjM+PgM+PcM=ICM



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Figure 16.2 Integrated Change Management *Overview of all the change challenges*

**INTEGRATED CHANGE MANAGEMENT** - is made up of five components below (see Figure 16.2)

**STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT** – Creating strategy not as fit to environment but as a series of strategic events which deliver benefit

- To ensure that strategy is robust in a changing world
- To reduce the risk of ‘betting the company’
- To make it easier to align with a range of strategic partners
- To make it realistic and executable in the time horizon of the leadership

**CHANGE MANAGEMENT** – Setting and managing the context of the change. Making sure that the people and the organisation are able to accept and benefit from the change

- To provide people with purpose, meaning and energy for embracing change
- To allow the people affected by new processes in the organisation to cope with the change
- To ensure that the political, structural, policy and cultural changes required to allow and embed the change are managed smoothly
- To ensure that old, inappropriate learning is removed and new learning is accepted and taken on board

## PERFECT PROJECTS

### **PROJECT MANAGEMENT – Ensuring that the deliverables meet with the goals of the organisation**

- To create a scoped ‘chunk of change’
- To manage the day-to-day resources and impacted stakeholders
- To ensure the timely, cost-appropriate, quality delivery of project goals
- To manage and communicate risks associated with successful delivery

### **PROCESS MANAGEMENT – Making sure that the delivery of processes is positively impacted by the change and people benefit**

- To ensure the coordinated rollout and implementation of improvements, acknowledging bottlenecks
- To ensure that people in the process can absorb and apply new learning
- To ensure effective knowledge management of the new solutions
- To provide information to key stakeholders (e.g., customers) on the new solutions

I wish it was self-explanatory but every time we have tried to simplify the model, we’ve ended up with an even scarier looking mess.

When I’m explaining it to new clients, I tell the story of how, when I was a kid, my best friend’s parents moved their home several miles away. I was miserable. I could either accept that I would no longer see him or I could remain connected with my best friend. I chose to stay connected. I needed an easy way for me to get to him or him to get to me. I worked out WHAT had to be achieved. Now I needed to invent a

### **PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT – Making sure that the complexity of the change is made simple enough to manage effectively**

- To ensure active management of the benefits
- To achieve coordinated use of resources on project priorities
- To connect project deliverables with day-to-day operations
- To interpret and direct significant strategic change and act as a single coordinating point
- To ensure that the project deliverables can be smoothly transitioned into day-to-day processes

range of different schemes on ways HOW I could do this. And I decided I needed a form of cheap transport. Perhaps a bike. But how to get a bike? I would do some extra chores to earn more money. I’d trawl other kids to see if they were selling a second-hand bike. I’d learn how to fix-up a bike. A month later, I had a bike. I could ride happily to see my friend. I’d do this every day after school. But I’d ignored a huge danger. Once my big brother saw how much freedom this gave me, he decided he’d use my bike instead of me. So then I had to find a way to persuade my mum to influence him to stop.

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That story has all the elements of **Integrated Change Management**.

<i>Ideas/ Opportunities/ Challenges</i>	<i>... when I was a kid, my best friend's parents moved their home several miles away. I was miserable.</i>
<i>Strategy (Vision/ Mission)</i>	<i>I could either accept that I would no longer see him or I could remain connected with my best friend. I chose to stay connected. I needed an easy way for me to get to him or him to get to me. I worked out WHAT had to be achieved.</i>
<i>Programme</i>	<i>Now I needed to invent a range of different schemes on ways HOW I could do this.</i>
<i>Project</i>	<i>I would do some extra chores to earn more money. I'd trawl other kids to see if they were selling a second-hand bike. I'd learn how to fix-up a bike. A month later I had a bike.</i>
<i>Process</i>	<i>I'd do this every day after school.</i>
<i>Benefits</i>	<i>I could ride happily to see my friend.</i>
<i>Change Management (Sponsor engagement)</i>	<i>Once my big bother saw how much freedom this gave me and he decided he'd use my bike instead of me. So then I had to find a way to persuade my parents to influence him to stop.</i>

Either because of opportunities or challenges, the organisation or enterprise acts to **consciously manipulate its future**. We call that willful intention to act Strategy Development (SD). It uses SD to work out the portfolio of unconnected (PoM) or programme of interdependent activities that need to happen (PgM). These are defined as the 'chunks' to be delivered or projects (PjM). As these projects are delivered, they enable repeatable activities or processes (PcM). However, for the processes to embed in the organisation you must address the internal shifts and needs of all the individuals affected, called **outcome stakeholders**, get their buy-in and help manage the change they experience or else they will undermine and overturn the new processes (CM). So it's not about the 'success' of an individual project or initiative; benefits/money only flow and continue to flow where there has been **Integrated Change Management**

One reason the benefits are elusive is because the owners and senior stakeholders don't know how to or are unable to contribute correctly to the project. I have a *BubbleDiagram*

I always share with senior managers and buyers. I read the three outcome bubbles in red (Fig16.3).

"The project owner (you), end up overworked,"

"Your project leader is ineffective and stressed and not transparent, and worse!"

"The business benefits are not achieved."

Like a slap to the face, that always gets their attention as their neck is on the line. Then I pick one of the loops or 'vicious cycles'.

"You end up having little time available for a demanding project leader >> who misses the key risks >> so the project drops into avoidable pitfalls >> forcing you to spend a significant amount of time reviewing it all and getting it back on track >> making you even more overworked!"

I always pause for at least three minutes to let the insight sink in. They usually begin to speak before I do. Then I hit them with another sequence before talking the diagram upwards from the bottom. In less than a quarter of an

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hour they are nodding vigorously in agreement and the sale is complete (Figure 16.3).

I pick up the pile of papers and flip through, shaking my head as I read them again.

We encourage clients to create what we call a **Possibility-People-Performance Management Office** or **PPPMO**. It is like a ) with a BIG difference. Traditionally, PMO's have been like a governance gopher. The organisation sets up

some vague rules for project governance without ever defining what governance is or why it is needed, then it appoints a well-paid person to be super-gopher. They rush around collecting updates, RAG (Red, Amber, Green) reports. They compile lists of project activities and dependencies; they coordinate things called 'Risk Logs'.

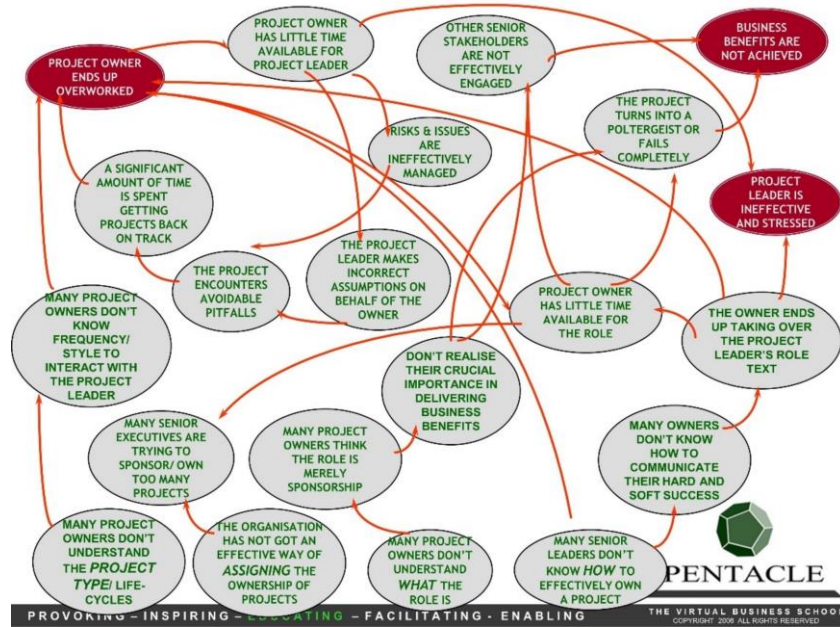


Figure 16.3 BubbleDiagram | Stressed Owner *Overworked, Underachieving, Ineffectual*

Often a risk log is a three-by-three grid of probability versus impact broken into High-Medium-Low Segments. My observation is that in practice, the project leader labels and ticks all

the project activities as low or medium. Why? Because anyone with any brains knows to avoid the 'high' boxes because then you get chased to do some extra work!

**ASIDE:** Risk logs serve no real functional purpose. Just another item the super-gopher can tick as 'Done'. To stop the process being gamed, use a two-by-two grid with just **high** versus **low**.

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Our PPPMO's have as a mission to facilitate the integrated change process. They do this hand-in-hand with the Programme Director who had five strands to manage, to ensure the strategy would be executed without failing at a later date or providing the organisation with an outcome that is no longer a relevant solution.

The charter was:

- Understand Organisational strategy
- Set goals on Project and manage the context.
- Lead invisibly without getting caught in the spider's web of internal politics,
- Monitor reality and deliverables and incorporate the learnings in the bigger picture
- Manage a 'Flock' of Projects and Change.

In my bicycle example the PPPMO would have quietly looked over my actions and plans (with a HealthCheck) to find where there were challenges, then it would have been whispering in my ear about being careful not to neglect my brother, then they would have provided training and tools to help me engage him in the change process. And then they would have told me what a wonderful job I'd done!

The idea and practice of Integrated Change Management PPPMO's was a real breakthrough and loved by all the clients. Another plus the new PPPMO gave was the flexibility to deal with project scale.

The issue of scale arose when one of our banking clients approached us because they found that the junior project managers they recruited were leaving within 3 months – and this was despite the fact they paid in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile.

They had instituted a process of providing each junior project manager with a mentor. They had ensured there was a contact point in the project management office but it had no effect. Five interviews later and I had the rudiments of one of Franck's bubble diagrams.

There were several 'anchors', which is what Franck calls what we would assume were root causes. The one that caught my eye was that, '*All projects are subject to the same governance process*'. As I wrote that bubble, the word 'Bingo!' almost literally, flashed purple before my eyes. I bet the governance process had been adopted for PRINCE2 or Agile or some such *single* approach and yet it was being applied to Foggy projects, Quests Movies and Painting-by-Numbers regardless.

Each project type has a different optimum methodology and activities. In addition, it was clear that the scale of projects the junior project managers were on, mostly did not warrant the heavy bureaucratic PMO governance process.

A few phone calls later and the selection mechanism was developed. Using IDQB I put forward the idea that the project manager would decide on whether their project was a **Big PJ** or a **small pj**. The shared solution was to use the prioritisation triangle of **Fast-Good-Cheap** to set the boundary. So projects that were to last less than 3 months or cost less than £50,000 or had stakeholders who were all easily contactable so they could meet often, were small pj.

The projects would be run under self-governance rules by the junior project manager asking help from their mentor as needed. *The pj projects would be streamed into Fog, Quest, Movie and PbN and would follow the best methodology and apply the appropriate PETS.*

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**ASIDE:** If you're working in the All Change cubicle on the QUBE campus, you'll be able to easily select the Whiteboard that matches the type of project. Then simply follow through **Define-Refine-Develop-Implement-Embed**. All the PETs you need are preloaded for you.

---

The junior project managers loved the concept of 'big PJays' and 'little pjays' and the staff retention rate rose to 100% over the following year. And the success rate of the projects rose by 30%.

So that's what I've been up to for eighteen months. But why was I so morose? It turns out that our top client, the real poster boy for a new way of success, had given me an impossible challenge.

We'd been celebrating another success on a video call when she said, "We can't thank you enough. You guys have really brought our business round. Pointless senior manager pet projects are no more, People engage and enjoy the tremendous pace of change we have managed. The fraction of well-run projects has increased from the national average of 40% to 64%. But I need a way to measure the in-project performance of projects – I'd like to build it around the process we already use. I want to move beyond that – I want my team to fix the problems before they even happen. I need to make sure that this is a real culture change and affects not just the Project Managers but also the Program Managers. I don't understand why they are not all perfect. **Can you make all our projects perfect?**

I'd been taking a sip of my coffee. My involuntary laugh sprays coffee over the table,

narrowly missing my keyboard. "Sorry," I mumble as I mop up with my handkerchief and end the call shortly afterwards, promising to 'take a look.'

And now here I sit with Cathy in the Italian restaurant, morose and defeated before I've even begun.

"That's a challenge and a half," agrees Cathy with a frown. "Perfect Projects. I wonder why we've never even considered the possibility before."

I look up and shrug. "Nothing goes wrong? No one misbehaves? Well, that's a laugh. That's ridiculous. A complex project? How? We've all seen those YouTube videos where rows and rows of dominoes are collapsed perfectly. Or is it to be like one of those Rube Goldberg machines, where a ball knocks over a ruler that starts a toy car that boils an egg that bursts a balloon? **'Perfect projects are impossible!'** I stutter, breathing heavily after my noisy rant.

Cathy is silent for a moment looking down at the table. Then she raises her head and we lock eyes. She intones, **"Treat the word 'impossible' as nothing more than motivation.'** Isn't that what you always quote?"

I'm beaten. I can't give up. But what... a lightbulb flickers on in my mind. And then I know exactly where to find the answer, Franck.

## It Is All Quite Simple

*In which the importance of setting up the right culture, rewards, processes and governance are explained.*

After 3 emails and 4 voice messages, I finally hear back from Franck.

Once I recognise his voice from 'Hello', I go straight to the challenge without the usual niceties. "So, Franck, why can't my client deliver Perfect Projects?" I'm expecting him to laugh uncontrollably as I had. Instead, there is a short silence. I fill it by asking, "Why can't I deliver Perfect Projects? Why hasn't anyone asked this question in the past?"

"They have and the answer is quite trivial," he answers.

"Trivial?" I bark back at him.

"Absolutely. And getting to Perfect Projects is..." he pauses as if selecting the best word "is... Er. Is... Er. Simple"

Now I bray with laughter. I'm imagining setting up a Rube Goldberg machine of great intricacy, that works perfectly first time. all the way from start - a candle flame burning a rope to its end - a rocket ship blasting off to Jupiter. The word 'Ridiculous' is bouncing around in my cranium.

"Apparently, 'people couldn't fly for a long time, I think, because they didn't *believe* it was possible. So of course, they didn't learn the first little principle of aerodynamics'." He says, quoting Richard Bach from *Illusions*, his and my favourite book also.

I nod slowly, wondering where this is leading.

"There are five little principles out there that turn projects from a struggle to being perfect every time."

"Five 'little' principles?" I ask incredulously.

"Yep, and I can tell from the tone of your voice that you don't think Perfect Projects are possible. That makes it impossible for you to learn those five principles. So, sorry. Perfect Projects are possible, but not for you. At least not today. Bye."

"Wait" I implore. "Wait," I struggle to think fast. "What, what do I have to do to *believe*?"

"I wrote a Socratic dialogue on the philosophy of delivering Perfect Projects 10 years ago. It starts with five scenarios. I'll send you those. Then you can tell me what you learn from them and if you get at least four of the five correct, you'll have passed and I'll introduce you to someone I know who runs an organisation where they use **ESP** to deliver **ZERO** every time."

My head is spinning. "ESP? Extra Sensory Perception? Use that to deliver nothing? What does that have to do with projects?"

Franck guffaws noisily. "**Eliminating Surprises from Projects** leading to ZERO defects..."

I hear a voice call his name in the background.

"Sorry I have to be somewhere else." he blurts and he's gone before I can thank him.

## **PERFECT PROJECTS**

## CHAPTER 17: DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PERFECT PROJECT

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*In which we introduce you to a brand-new world for the first time*

I wake early. After my stretches and invigorating 2-minute cold shower, I eagerly open the lid on my laptop to check my email. I'm hoping to plan my travel route and have

everything set up before I have to make breakfast for Seth.

I open the email from Franck. It's short and there is no destination address for the meeting.

SUBJECT: Directions to Alcorp ITSL - Deliver Perfect Projects

MESSAGE:

Here you go.

<https://QUBE.cc/Register>

Sarah will meet you in the Reception at 09:07. Be a few minutes early, it helps.

This is where you will find their campus:

<https://QUBE.cc/ITSL-Project-Office-Reception>

"Huh? Franck hadn't said anything about meeting virtually. He'd talked about them showing me around their amazing campus and me dropping into meetings and workshops. My heart sinks at the thought of yet another eight hours on Teams or Zoom staring at hot foreheads and boring powerpoint slides. The only good news is that I now have time for a more leisurely breakfast.

Now it's 09:03. "It's good to see you. Franck said you'd be early." A pleasant, warm, musical voice is coming at me from a purple, square smiley-head atop a rectangular body and legs.

She seems to have no arms. "Welcome to our campus.

I was early but I wasn't expecting this. "You look like a plank," I think but I'm too polite to say. Instead, I say: "I can't see myself. I don't know where I am."



She giggles, "You are funny. Next, you'll be telling me I look like a plank! This isn't a computer game. It's *super-reality*. May I ask, in *normal* reality do you see your body floating ahead of you as you walk around?"

## PERFECT PROJECTS

“No.” I reply firmly.

“Just as well,” she teases. “People who see their bodies separate from themselves often have to be locked up as insane. You are looking out of your own eyes but have no nose to look at. You will discover that is more useful than always having a head in the way of what you are trying to see.”

“I see.” I say, not seeing her point at all.

“If you come over to the site map, I’ll walk you through where you will be going today.” As she speaks, she turns jerkily and points at a small image on the wall. Above it a yellow location-style pin pops up that she clicks and her slim plank-like, purple avatar pauses, then slides away.

I copy her, clicking on the yellow pin 📍. Funny, when she made the move, it looked clunky to me. But with me in the driving-seat it feels perfectly natural.

The previously small image on the facing wall now fills my screen. And now I see her point. She’s right. It’s so much easier to just see what you are interested in without a silly avatar head in the way.” The image is a map of a campus. We are here.” she says, pointing with a purple laser at a building marked ‘Lobby’. “You start at 09:15 with John in the Office Block. Then you will join me in the Learning Centre. I’ll show you round one of my project qubicles. Then Mei will let you sit in on a teaching session. And finally, you will have a surprise for your last session. Plan to take

lunch at 12:30 until 13:30 in the Community Café. You have to bring your own food though!” She laughs.

“I don’t...” I begin and then I get the joke and laugh also.

“Behind you on the podium is the visitors’ book. There will be a tab with your agenda.”

Suddenly I hear her voice behind me. For a second I can’t figure out how to turn around, but I’ve played computer games before so I guess. I hit the arrow key and of course, turn round. It’s easy.

She’s pointing at a green and white slate. I join her. She instructs “Click on the tab with your name for your agenda.”

I do as asked and laid out on the left is a neat timetable for my day.

To the right are two grey and white posters (Figures 17.1 and 17.2).

As Sarah points at the posters, she says, “**LearnBySharing** to help you capture and structure what you discover. The **RAPID** is to capture what you will do afterwards, back in real life.” “Come back here during your bio breaks and fill these out as you go through the day. That way at the end of the day, we will have a clear summary of what you’ve learnt and what you and your colleagues are going to do about it.”



I nod. “But how...”

**PERFECT PROJECTS**

Time	Activity	Location - QRL	Link
09:00	Arrival and Briefing	<u>Reception</u>	
09:15	Purpose & Performance Indicators Meeting	<u>ExecQubicle John</u>	
10:00	Bio Break	<u>Reception</u>	
10:12	Gaining Perspective of Incidents	<u>WorkshopQubicle</u>	
12:22	Bio Break	<u>Reception</u>	
12:30	Lunch and Networking	<u>Community Cafe</u>	
13:30	Practitioner Insight	<u>TeachingQubicle</u>	
14:17	Mentoring Backwards	<u>Project Qubicle</u>	
15:23	Bio Break	<u>Reception</u>	
16:05	Mentoring Forwards	<u>Project Qubicle Sarah</u>	
16:47	RAPID, LearnBySharing	<u>Reception</u>	
17:00	Close		

**PERFECT PROJECTS**

LearnBySharing™

<p><b>My Biggest Surprise?</b></p> 	<p><b>What I learnt?</b></p>	<p><b>How could I use this in future?</b></p>
<p><b>Group favourite</b></p> 	<p><b>Group favourite</b></p>	<p><b>Group favourite</b></p>



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Figure 17.1 Learn by Sharing | Learning Audit *No surprises-Panic. No future actions-Doomed!*

R.A.P.I.D.™

Project Title:	Responsible	Accountable	Provides Input	Decision owner	Date Created:
Chunk - Task - Activity - Outcome	Has/ owns the resources which allow them to respond	You are counting on this person to deliver...	Provides input in the form of resource information, materials, etc.	Has the Decision rights associated with this...	Sheet ____
					Of ____
					Valid Until:

*Who has what role in ensuring success?*




SOURCE BOOK/PUBLICATION: *Never Re-Organise Again* Eddie Obeng

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Figure 17.2 R.A.P.I.D. | Who is Doing What? *And who gets to Decide?*

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She's anticipated my question and answers fast. "We tend to use a lot of sticky notes around here. You get the sticky from the icon."

I have a go. I click on the sticky note icon  and up pops a box to type into.

"Any other questions?" she asks smartly as if she can't wait to get me started.

I can't think of any except, "How do I get to my first session?"

"Just use the links on the agenda. "

"We have an etiquette on our campus. We always gather in a circle to face each other to say, 'Bye.'" She asks, "Can you see the list of **Places** on the menu?"

I pause, unable to see anything in my panic. Then I spot it. "Erm, yes."

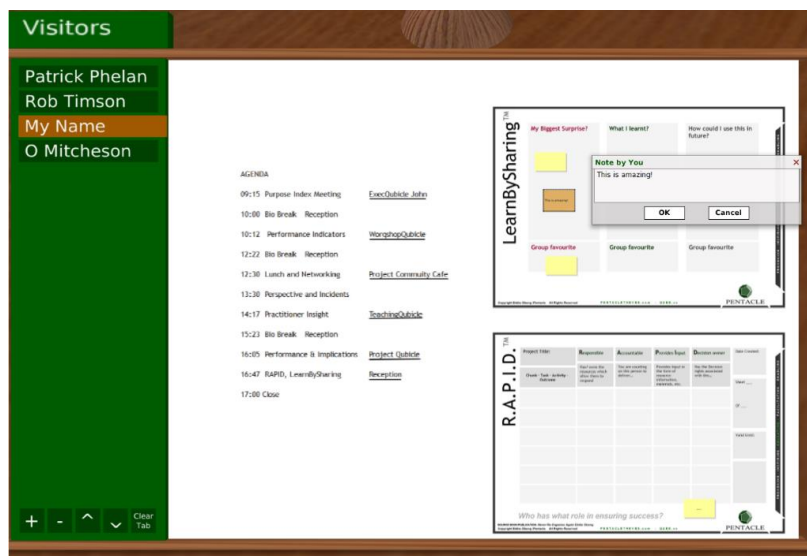
"Use the Places short cut to get us to all 'Gather in a Circle'."

I do as she asks and in a second, we are face-to-face. "OK, Bye," she says, "See you later."

"Bye." I reply, but she's already gone. Evaporated with a sound like a light bulb going out.

I stare at the screen for a second, raise my head from the computer screen and look round my room – my real room. This is definitely the strangest virtual meeting I've ever been to. I pause a second and then type 'This is amazing' into the sticky note dialog box and drag it to the section headed 'My Biggest Surprise' on the LearnBySharing poster.

I move back to the agenda, pause for a moment and then cautiously click the link to ExecQubicle John. (Figure 17.3)



The screenshot shows a virtual meeting interface. On the left, a green sidebar titled "Visitors" lists names: Patrick Phelan, Rob Timson, My Name (highlighted in orange), and O Mitcheson. Below the sidebar is a navigation area with a plus sign, minus sign, up arrow, down arrow, and a "Clear Tab" button. The main area displays an agenda with time slots and activities, including "ExecQubicle John", "WorkshopQubicle", "Project Commalls Cafe", "TeachingQubicle", and "Reception". Two posters are visible: "LearnBySharing" and "R.A.P.I.D.". The "LearnBySharing" poster has a sticky note dialog box open over it with the text "Note by You: This is amazing!". The "R.A.P.I.D." poster has a table with columns for "Project Name", "Requestor", "Account", "Project Start", "Status", and "Date closed".

Figure 17.3 Slate with Agenda and Posters *Slates sit on desks as an individual working area. Each name on the 'tab' above selects another white slate which can contain more PETs and information.*

## Purpose Index

**Purpose:** being clear on why we are setting out on this perilous journey.



Puffy white clouds sit below a deep blue sky above a wide-scape of London, the dome of St. Pauls towering above the other buildings. Behind a huge mahogany desk covered in massive monitors stands a red avatar with a welcoming smile and a deep voice, “I’m John,” he says warmly. “Franck was very persuasive in getting us to host you for the day. He says you’re one of his students.”

“In a way, yes, very much so. Franck has been coaching me for many years.” I can’t help myself, I say, “What a marvellous office.”

“And the rent is so low,” he chuckles. “On QUBE anyone can have marvellous real-estate like this fabulous office overlooking St. Paul’s! To my left is a shelf for my files, powerpoints, spreadsheets. To my right, there is a noticeboard for daily planning with the team. On my desk, the two displays are fully functioning– just like your

display on your real desk. But the most important thing is not the office...”

“No? What is it?” I say, curiously.

**“It’s the sense of engagement and belonging that even introverts appreciate - the alignment and intimacy - even across people who speak different languages. You can reach so far above the best level that you can achieve in real life! The fact you are about five times as productive as you are in real life because of the culture we work to and Franck’s powerful PETs. And of course, the warm, enveloping laughter.”**

“Oh.” I reply, unsure of how to respond.

“We don’t often meet many people interested in how to achieve zero project defects, as we do. I have learnt that most people think it is impossible and are distracted by

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whatever is the current project management fashion. I understand these days it's AI, neuroscience and rewilding. There is NO PASSION to *eliminate surprises from projects and make more happen with less stress.*"

I confess instantly how I'd guffawed when I'd been challenged to deliver Perfect Projects.

John replies sadly, "I know." nodding the head of his avatar. Then he perks up, "Well, good you are on time. We have time for me to explain what will otherwise be bewildering. Franck will have explained to you that *not all change is improvement* and that *successful change is chosen to be complete and carried out without creating destructive change?*" He says slowly and solemnly, "**A 'complete' project is everything from the spark of an idea to an established process, behaviours or final deliverable.**"

"Yes. I agree. Franck has drummed that into my head." Then out of curiosity I add, "How did you nod your avatar head? I keep nodding my real head but I guess you can't see that?"

He laughs. "When you slide the screen or move your pointer your head moves."

I slide up and down.

"I see you agree." he responds. "Once we see a need for change, to address a problem, improve what we currently do, or to create a positive business result from a possibility or opportunity, the first thing we do is check it is worthwhile. As our projects are all novel, we also need to work out what we will observe and measure to be sure we are going in the right direction and not disrupting the current business or other projects. Make sense?"

I use Franck's PlayBak PET badly. I say, "So If I've understood you correctly, you not only check the business case but also how to keep on track?"

"Correct. So this meeting is in two parts. We will create indicators for both progress and outcome. But first, we'll explore a challenge we have and establish what resolving it involves and what benefits it brings. This establishes the purpose of the project. We tend to be very open and challenging and also to seek wide opinions and accept a level of vagueness. Who does the proposed project touch? We look for people who are stakeholders and invite them to the meeting. "Come over here." he says, as his avatar glides to a white board to my right. "This is the list of roles we use to decide who to invite to this meeting. It is derived from our **Integrated Change Map.**"

"How do I...?" I begin.

But he butts-in, saying, "Click on my qubot and **Follow.**"

I do as instructed and now I'm facing the whiteboard. I know what an Integrated Change Map is but as I look down his long list it takes me a while to realise that they have comprehensively listed all the key roles that might occur in **Integrated Change Management.**

"Phew! That is a pretty comprehensive list."

"Yes, best to throw the net wide. We are very scared of DBS, I mean Dead Body Syndrome (Figure 17.4). As you will see, not everyone will join the session. But often, as we all know these roles, they find someone to represent their point of view. They can be here even though they can't be here. Some others, if they feel really strongly

## PERFECT PROJECTS

about a topic, come in and leave their ideas and points on the PETs before we meet for the session.”

“Follow me, again,” he says as he slides sideways, “This is the PET, er I mean **People Engagement Tool.**”

As I follow, I reply, “I know about Franck’s PETs.”

Now we are facing a PET titled ‘StakeholderGrid 1’ (Figure 17.5).

I squeal with delight and recognition. “I know this one.”

“Good. This is the one we use for finding and thinking about all the other stakeholders.”

“Do you have many in box 4?”

John replies, “Several” and corrects himself, “Too many. So the project had better be worth it. Anyway, once we’ve found the stakeholders to invite, we go through a simple process. We share a vague outline of the situation in advance. When they arrive, we capture their hopes and fears quickly, squashing any fears. Then we brainstorm together the up-sides and down-sides of the project and what it entails. That allows us to make guesses at what metrics and measurements or performance indicators we can set to track overall progress and success. We call it a ‘Leap-the-Gap’ meeting.”

**DeadBodySyndrome™**

**A. What is the Task/Process?**

Deliver something important

**B. Who are the Stakeholders?**

Ted

**PEOPLE/ENGAGEMENT**  
Mindset, Capability, Habits & Culture

**TASK/PROCESS**  
Workflow, Activity & Technology

	C. Manage the People... [As you act, slide your sticky to the RIGHT] to...			D. Manage the Task!	
Stakeholder Name by Type:	1 Engage	2 Transfer Ownership	3 Initiate	4 Support	5 Celebrate
Dracula Killers	<i>Align: Hopes&amp;Fears - ground rules</i>	<i>Share the problem &amp; prize - No surprises: IDQB GapLeap</i>	<i>Be Clear and Ensure you've been Understood: 5Ps</i>	<i>Explain how to be the best empoweree ever!</i>	
Fence Post Holders	<i>Build Trust: BlyndTrussed</i>	<i>Make Accountability clear: R.A.P.I.D.</i>	<i>Implications Question Expectations Mirror RAPID</i>	<i>AnxietyGap Leap</i>	
Punters	<i>Learn their Vision: PlayBak Share what's working: Here2There</i>	<i>Remove worry: FixItNow AnxietyGap</i>		<i>Never, ever take the task back: CO.A.C.H.</i>	

Manage the People to Manage The Tasks – Never Manage the Tasks Directly

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Purpose index

Figure 17.4 Dead Body Syndrome DBS *Manage the people to manage the task. Never, ever manage the task directly.*

## PERFECT PROJECTS

## Lunch

I'm too wrapped up in what I'm learning to feel hungry, so I head directly for the Community Café.

As the qubicle appears, it's not what I was expecting. Given the 'Minecraft-like, clunky style of the super-real world, I'd expected a grey refectory with a table tennis table in one corner, a notice board with out-of-date notices and a seating area probably against a grey wall.

Instead, I arrive on a huge green lawn bordered by groups of chairs under large multicoloured outdoor umbrellas. Beyond these I could see groups of rattan chairs scattered between what I could only imagine were exhibition pods. What struck me was that all this was under a cobalt blue sky, clear but for a few cirrus ice clouds blowing past.



Figure 17.15 The New World Café *Just Chillin'*

I turn a full circle. Behind me is an absolutely huge outdoor screen showing a video. I glance at it for a second and note a man in a bright orange shirt gesturing energetically; beyond that, a stunning cream, eighteen-century, English house with two floors of distinctive octagonal windows. That is just about the last thing I was expecting to see in a super-real world!

There are about a hundred people milling around. When I say people, I mean qubots. But

surprisingly, I've now started to see them as people not planks. How on earth will I find Sarah?

The closest group to me is sat under a blue and grey umbrella. I select a chair to join them. "Excuse me for interrupting, I'm supposed to be meeting Sarah. How do I find her?"

Ted the green qubot replies, "Easiest way is, find her in the **People** list, click to **Go To** her."

## PERFECT PROJECTS

“That simple?” I think, but I say, “Thanks.” And follow their instructions. In a second, I’m indoors seated on a bean bag.

“I thought we’d get a bit more peace if we met in the team space. I’m still eating so you talk for now, if you wish.” She mumbles, “What was your biggest surprise so far?”

I say slowly, “I’m sort of amazed at how many people there are here. When you said community, I know it sounds dumb given the fact this is a super-real world but I imagined a dry, dead, unappetising web portal page with dusty old postings.”

Sarah laughs, then coughs having slightly choked on her drink.

“Sorry.” I mumble.

“It isn’t enough to have great project managers. It’s not enough to have revolutionary tools, PETS and processes. *What makes it all*

*work is a strong and common culture.* And this is one of the ways we nurture, develop and embed the culture. By interacting, having fun and learning from each other informally.

“Every Wednesday lunchtime, someone proposes a video to watch on the big screen. Once it’s over many informal conversations take place. We also use the pods,” she says, pointing out the window at the exhibition areas I’d noticed earlier, “to showcase successes and failures, and a lot more.” she says calmly.

“Wander around and speak to a couple of people. I’ll follow on your shoulder as I eat but you lead us.”

Everyone is very welcoming and open. I’m not sure I’m asking the best questions but I can’t think of others.

Now it’s time for me to leave. My next agenda item is to discover what Practitioner Insight is about.



Figure 17.16 The New World Café Crowd of qubots

[LINK: QUBE.cc/WeConnectWednesday](http://LINK: QUBE.cc/WeConnectWednesday)

# MAP OF PROJECT ISSUES AND PETS

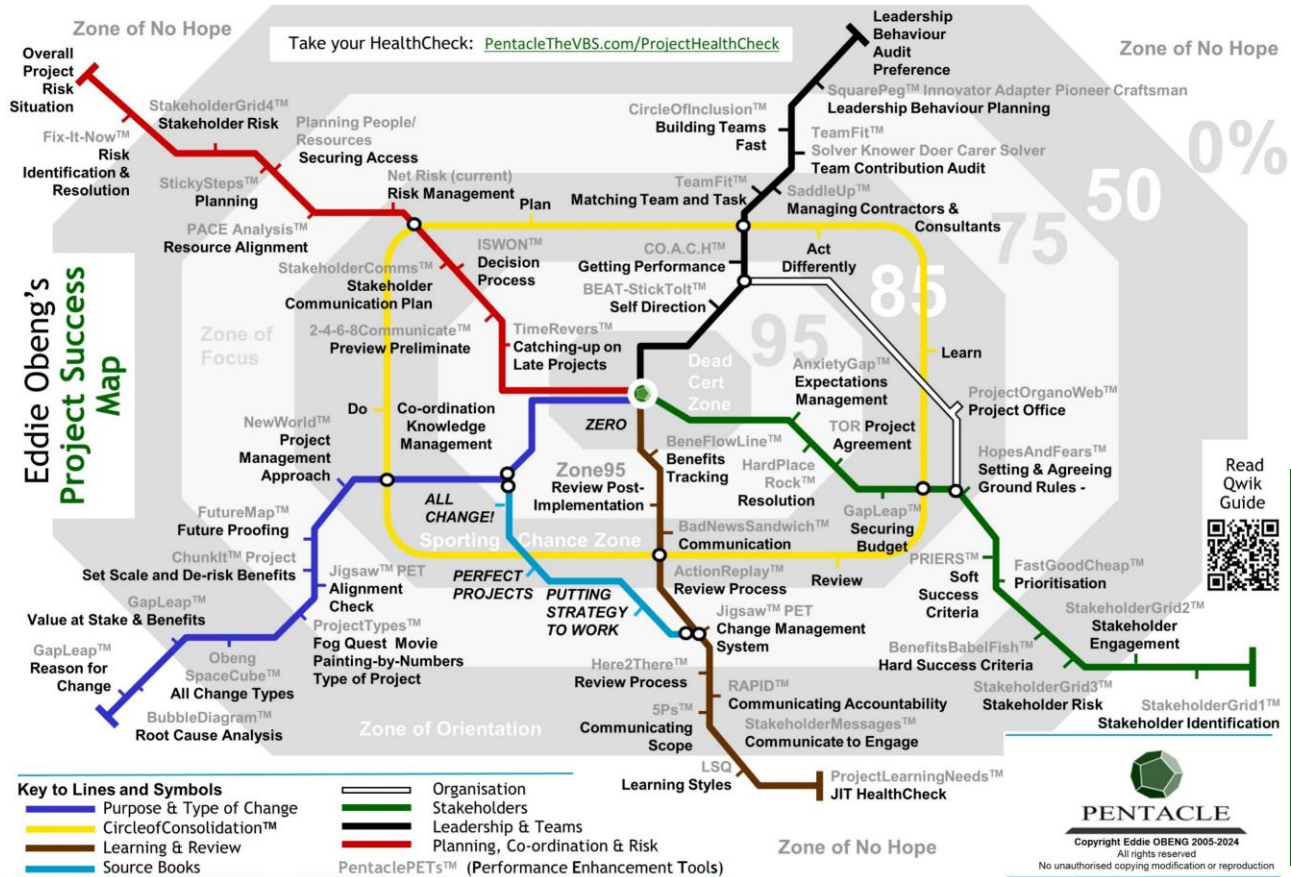


Figure 18.1 Project Success Map | Issues and PETS

Take the online HealthCheck to plot your current situation and chance of success.  
 Note what you must learn next to move from the 'Zone of No Hope' closer to the centre  
 LINK: [PentacleTheVBS.com/ProjectHealthCheck](https://PentacleTheVBS.com/ProjectHealthCheck)

Download and Print The Map LINK: [PentacleTheVBS.com/ProjectSuccessMap](https://PentacleTheVBS.com/ProjectSuccessMap)

## PERFECT PROJECTS

”

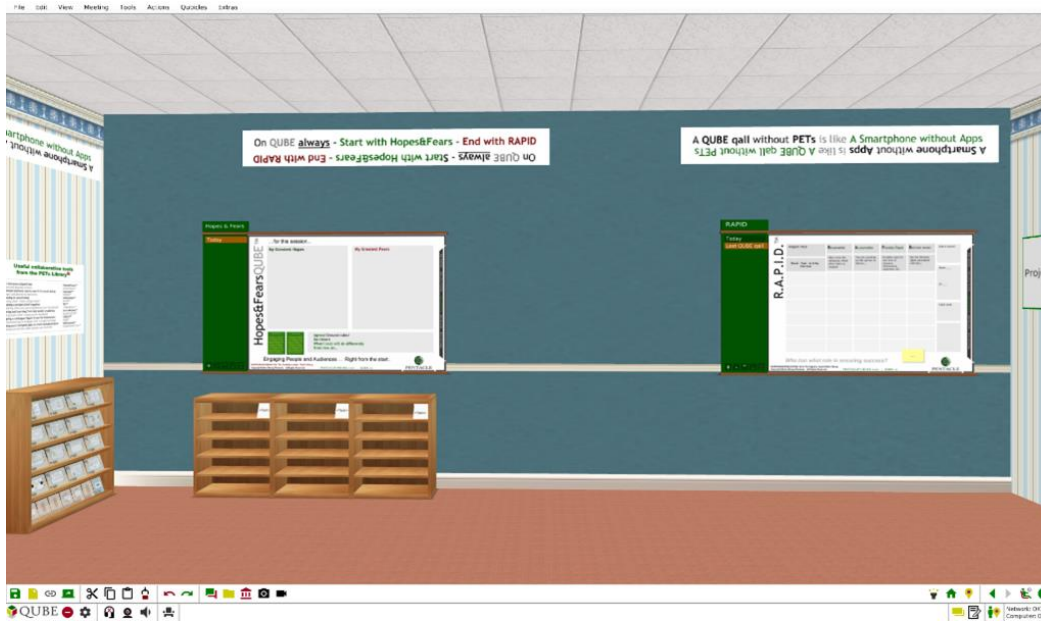


Figure 18.6 QwikProject Qubicle *Perfect for a small team together or dispersed.*

*The Hopes&Fears and RAPID boards provide bookends to every meeting (or DrumBeat)*

*At the start, alignment is quick. Set Hopes&Fears for your joint activity. Assign a scribe to capture learning, decisions, actions and tasks on the RAPID board. Review it at the end. All team members can come back in anytime, 24\*7 for clarification.*

*The shelves store spreadsheets and documents. Use “One Version Of The Truth - OVOTT” bring people to the work don’t email versions to them. No more mistakes from work on old versions.*

*To the left is a shelf full of the most useful PETS.*

She turns saying, “Follow me. The brackets of every QUBE call here, (we call the regularly set ones **DrumBeats**) is on this wall that you arrive at and face. As it says on that banner, ‘On QUBE you always begin with Hopes&Fears and end with a RAPID’.”

“I’d noticed that.” I reply brightly.

“To our left, the wall is dominated by a whiteboard (Figure 18.7). Here we want to transform your thinking from one-size-fits-all in project management. You start by considering the type of project you are leading. This is the board for a Foggy project,” she says as she points at the green tab sticking above the board. But is it the correct one to use for your next project? It

## PERFECT PROJECTS

has clear goals. We'll use the Quest whiteboard.” She clicks on the switch panel to the left and the whiteboard swaps to another.

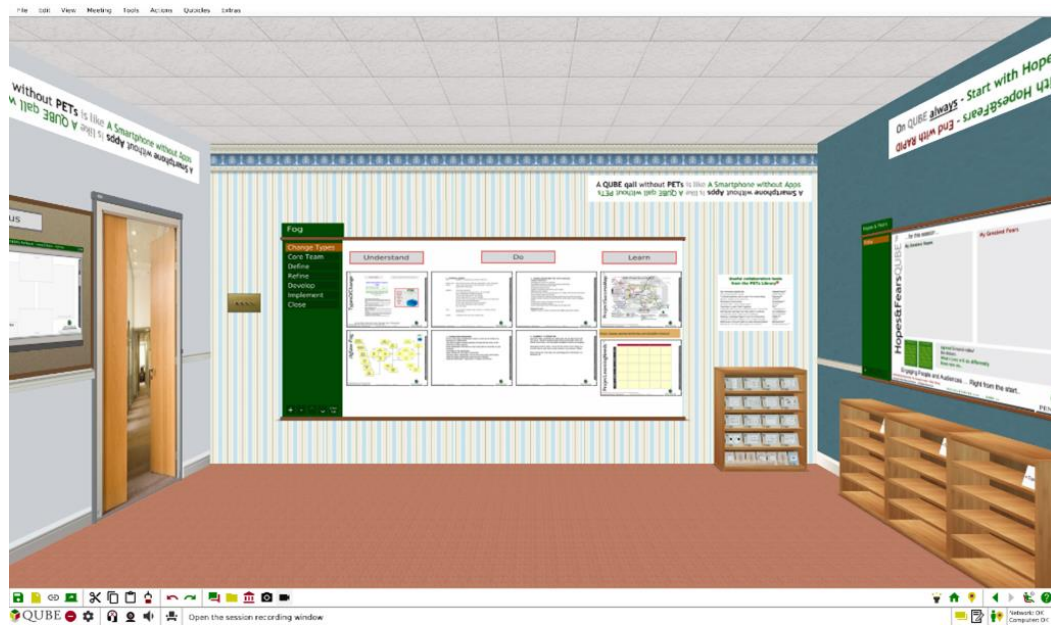


Figure 18.7 QwikProject Qubicle Whiteboard

*In your QwikProject Qubicle there is a **multi-Project whiteboard**. Use the switch to the left. The Project Leader uses the switch to the left to select the correct whiteboard for the type project. In the image Fog has been selected.*

*The PETs are laid out to guide the team through the JigSaw journey. Start by reading the QwikGuide on the special characteristics and tips for success with Foggy projects. You can audit*

*your team to discover your Achilles' heels for tackling a Foggy project. Do this before you begin the project and resolve issues instantly.*

*Then managing the project journey/lifecycle flows: Define, Refine, Develop, Implement, Close & Embed*

*p.s. The terrible blue and grey striped wallpaper solves the problem faced by every other virtual reality environment except QUBE, nausea!*

“So what do we have here – A chance to do a HealthCheck and work out the just-in-time learning you need, a cheat sheet to guide you to

more helpful behaviours, thinking and actions? The tabs gently guide you from definition to close with the most likely PETs you will need.”

## PERFECT PROJECTS

“Over here,” she says turning left again, “is a presentation area (Figure 18.8). We know that as you explain and co-create you will use

visualisation, draw, watch videos, read together and so on. There are also noticeboards for status and notices for team members.”

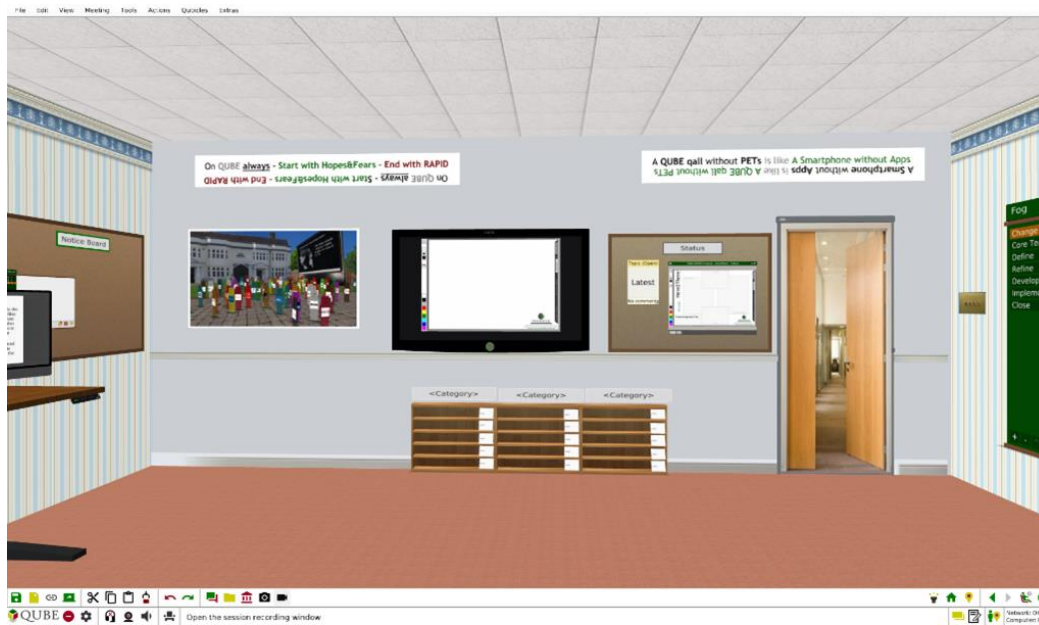


Figure 18.8 6 QwikProject Qubicle Presentation Area

*To the left is a working desk with displays. Next to that a cork Noticeboard for the team. Ahead is a large display screen for group presentations, videos and where you can leave video messages and instructions. This facilitates your*

*asynchronous working and frees you from the tyranny of scheduling meetings in diaries.*

*To the right of that is a status board and a door (portal) to other qubicles in your campus.*

“And we also know that as the Project Lead your stakeholders need you to have a ‘desk’ somewhere they can leave you notes and inputs (Figure 18.9). You also need somewhere to work

and communicate. Of course the shelves around the room are perfect for all the project materials.”

## PERFECT PROJECTS

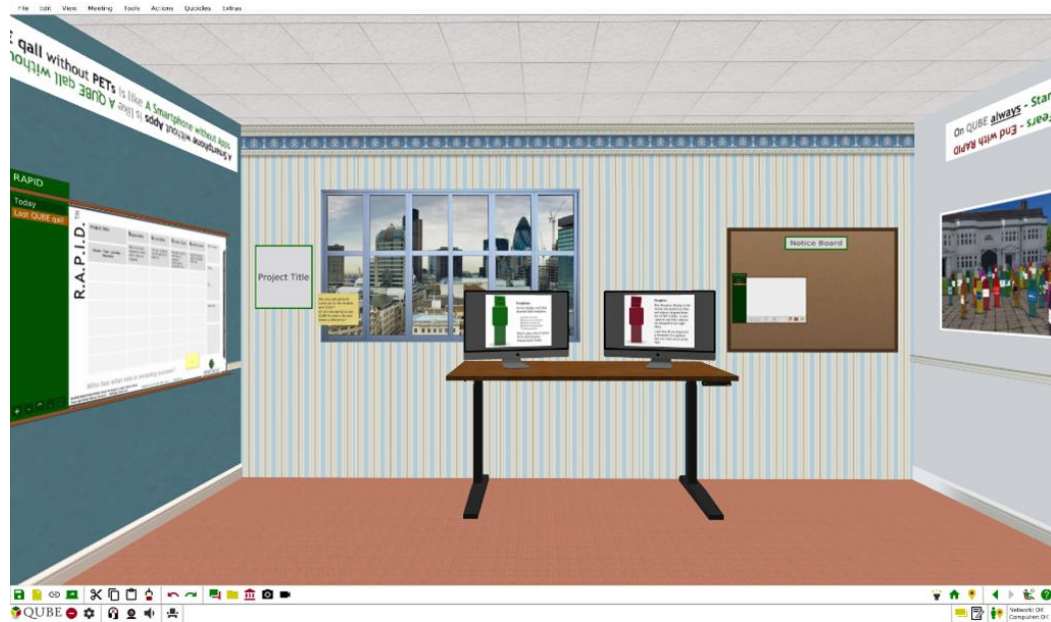


Figure 18.9 6 QwikProject Qubicle Desktop

### *IMPORTANT:*

*You can change the view out of the window!*

*You can change the terrible striped wallpaper also if you wish but we would recommend a shift to some other terrible lined wall paper. Why? For some of the gentler souls in your team you will be stopping motion sickness and them throwing*

*up! You need strong verticals and horizontals in the qubicle.*

*And you can change the colours of the walls but do not make them all the same colour or you will find people get very lost and can't remember which way they were facing!*

*I know, science*

Book 4

**The Art of  
Transformation -  
MetaMorph**



## CHAPTER 20: TRANSFORM BEYOND CHANGE

---

### Monday

TIME: 11:00

LOCATION My ExecutiveQubicle

TOPIC: Miracle? Magic? Metamorphosis.

I don't understand why that should be the case. I say, "I don't understand why that should be the case." I'm speaking to Franck about Cleo's challenge. He has suggested that I won't be able to just use the change and project management approaches I know to achieve success.

Franck pauses as though thinking up an explanation. "OK." he says, "You know what a butterfly is?"

"Yes, I reply."

"And you know what a caterpillar is?"

"Of course." I snap.

"So, a caterpillar hatches, it learns the skills of moving multiple legs, it learns to hide from predators, it moves from leaf to leaf, it grows. Is all of that change?"

"Yes," I say flatly, "the caterpillar is changing."

"So, if it keeps doing those things long enough, it turns into a butterfly?"

"No." I say, "of course not."

"Are you sure that a butterfly isn't just a caterpillar that has grown some wings?"

I pause, trying to work out if the joke is on me, "No. It has to change more than that."

"If you were to list the capabilities of a caterpillar, would they be walking, eating leaves, hiding and so on?"

"Yes?" I question, fearing he's leading me into a trap.

"And if you were to list the capabilities of a butterfly, what would they be?"

I pause only briefly, "Flying, I guess, drinking nectar..." I run out of ideas.

"And you are certain that sticking wings on a caterpillar doesn't make it a butterfly?" he asks in a mocking tone.

"No, of course not." I say emphatically, "It has to become a chrysalis in a cocoon and then it becomes a butterfly."

"Would you say it 'transforms' into a butterfly?" he says again, in that slightly mocking tone.

The light finally goes on in my dim brain. Of course. "I get it Franck, the caterpillar *transforms* into a butterfly!"

## TRANSFORMATION

**“Ha!” he replies. “It creates scaffolding for transformation, your cocoon, then it loses, literally dissolves, parts of its body whilst staying alive, and loses all the caterpillar capabilities. At the same time, it develops butterfly capabilities, limbs and wings. Then it emerges as a butterfly.”**

I get it. I think. I say, “OK. I get it.”

His voice becomes low and conspiratorial. “But we have not spoken of the most crucial aspect. Would you go to a caterpillar for flying lessons?”

“No.” I reply without hesitation.

“Why not?”

“Because caterpillars can’t fly.”

“Not only can’t caterpillars fly, they probably can’t even imagine flying. And I’m sure the caterpillar that gets the most kudos from his mates is the one who is the fastest leaf muncher. Coordinating a hundred legs, planning the best nibbling path across the leaf - those are real skills!

So if you asked caterpillars to list the stuff they think is cool, ‘flying’ wouldn’t even be on

the list. I bet they would have some pretty insulting descriptions for anyone who can’t leaf munch and instead delicately sips nectar and ‘flies’ for God’s sake!”

I laugh out loud. When he describes it in that way, it’s pretty obvious that ‘transformation’ is different from just ‘change’.

“So,” he continues coolly, “when a client clearly articulates their strategy in detail for digital transformation what must you immediately conclude?”

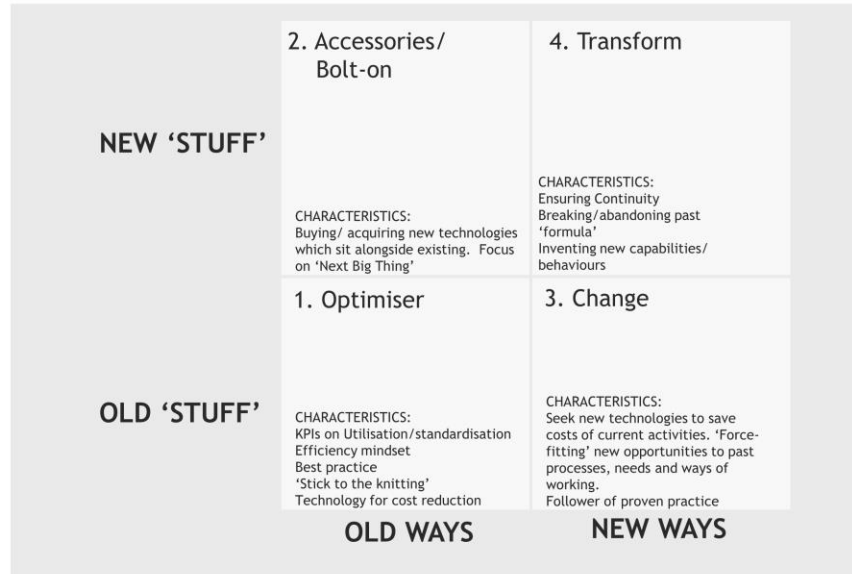
A beat and then it sinks in. **What they have in mind is a ‘change’ strategy – it’s not ‘transformation’.** If it was transformation, they wouldn’t be able to articulate it.

“Correct!” Franck replies triumphantly. The technical term is metamorphosis. **“Transformation means an inaccurate dream followed by a journey through the fog of uncertainty, keeping the essence alive, building structures and processes for the short term that allow you to learn and create capabilities for the emerging transformed state.”**

He points at a simple 2x2 grid (Figure 20.1)

## TRANSFORMATION

MetamorphGrid™



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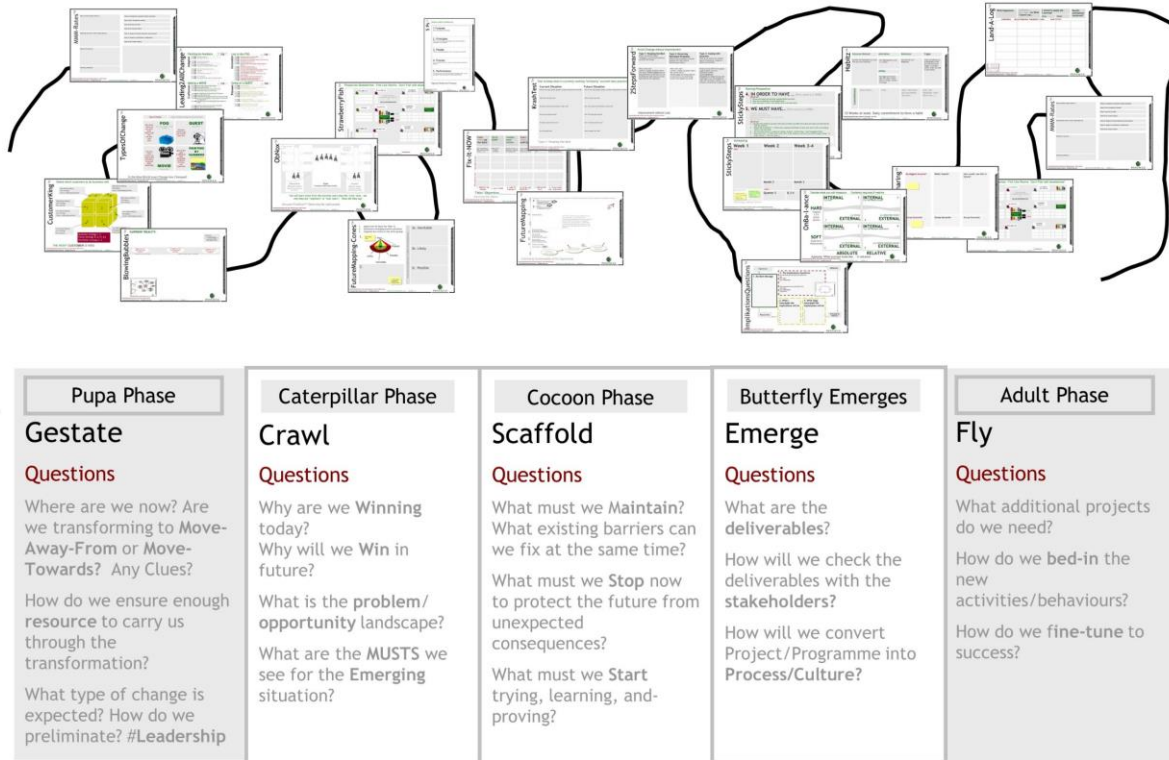
Figure 20.1 MetamorphGrid | Transformation

Now Franck is telling me a story. It's one of his typical vignettes. By now I know that he teaches always using his method of placing the example before the point he wants to make and using Socratic questions to transfer the ownership of the learning to the learner. I listen patiently as he speaks using his 'eXampleOint' method.

I can always tell when he plans to share a revolutionary idea because he is careful not to 'spook the horses' by surprising you with a new assertion. The relatively normal and mundane example is easily assimilated and understood

and lets you, by yourself, reach the conclusion, the point. So in a way, you convince yourself through your own discovery. I remember him explaining that he invented the method to avoid the Third Law of Change. **People Create Change – People Constrain Change.**

Now here comes the example. "There's an apocryphal story about how a group of Kayapo from the Amazon spend a week in New York City and upon their return they tell stories of the supermarkets with piles of fruit and fish."



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Figure 20.5 PETnav Transform | Overview

I conclude – “Can we meet on QUBE over the next few days?” I say, expecting the inevitable question.

Cleo asks “What is QUBE?”

I’ve been asked so many times and I’ve realised I can’t really explain it. I mumble, “It’s a

## TRANSFORMATION

new way of working productively and collaboratively. It's very natural. You speak to people, visit their offices, use your favourite spreadsheets and software, meet up for coffee, text them. Your new way of working is encouraged by providing you with all the easy-to-use tools you need. Everyone there behaves in such a way that the culture makes you feel included and creative. It's really cool. Here, let me show you."

I play up two one-minute videos on my phone for her. The first shows eight people (actually qubots) having a project meeting – or Drumbeat as they call it.

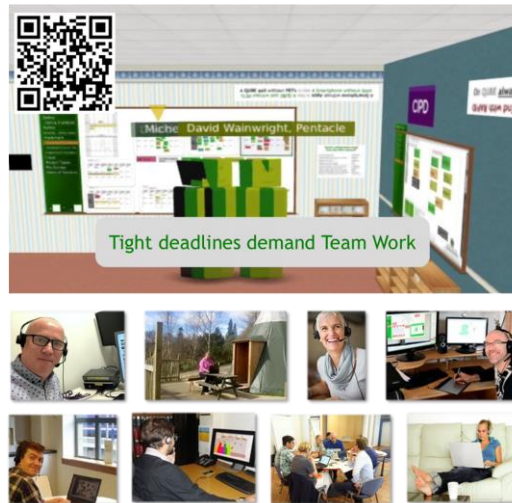


Figure 20.7 Video of a DrumBeat  
[QUBE.cc/DrumBeat-in-a-minute](http://QUBE.cc/DrumBeat-in-a-minute)

The second is a beautiful animation.

Thursday



Figure 20.8 Video Explainer of a Campus  
[QUBE.cc/QubeRealityVideo/](http://QUBE.cc/QubeRealityVideo/)

"Oh!" she says surprised. "I just assumed it would be software."

"The software only exists to help you to be human." I say in response. "Franck calls it 'Learn&DoWare.'"

"I see." she says thoughtfully. "**QUBE is a comprehensive answer to the question 'How to enable people in distributed teams to working all over the place.' It looks like with QUBE, you get a better place to work.**" She pauses briefly and adds, "A 'Betiverse'."

I laugh. "It's more like 'Minecraft for Project Managers' – and you don't need a silly headset."

"And will we get our own campus? Can we use it anytime? Does it come with expert guides? And are the tools baked in? How many people can we have...?"

"Whoah. **Whether you're tackling a tough project or just need help navigating a difficult issue, QUBE has everything you need to succeed.**"

"Oh!" says Cleo, "In that case, I will definitely meet you on QUBE."

## TRANSFORMATION

TIME: 14:00

LOCATION: Learning Centre Workshop qubicle

TOPIC: Customise – PETS

The IT police took all day to grant Cleo's PC access to a new URL for QUBE!

I've taken advantage of the time to set up a workshop qubicle for us to use (Figure 20.9).

I've chosen a massive yellow room as I expect the core team of the programme of projects to grow.

Frank's PETnav takes us through five generic stages; **Gestate, Crawl, Scaffold, Emerge** and **Fly**. The generic PETs suggested are already set up on the discussion whiteboard.

My task is to add specialist PETs, the ones identified in the "Why culture change fails" BubbleDiagram.

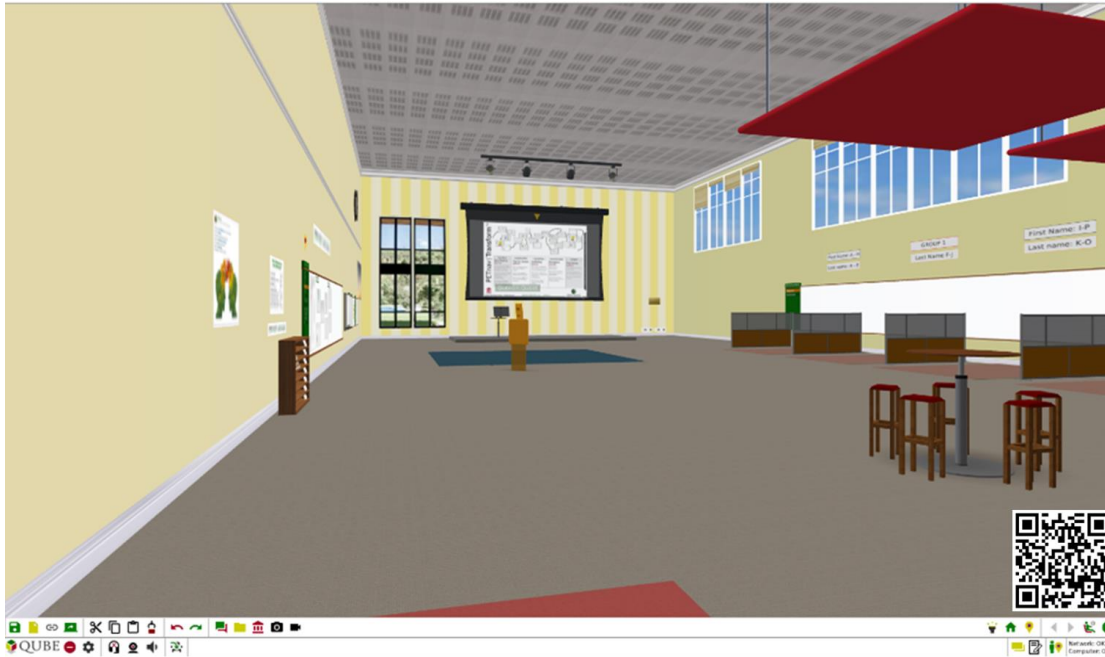


Figure 20.9 The Big Yellow Workshop Qubicle

To the right are Breakout zones. The red carpets indicate sound bubbles, so you'll only hear distinctly other people in your breakout zone.

The café table is one of many, providing social chat and team cohesion.

12 Rules™

Avoid Thinking Mistakes – Respond Rationally to the World we're in!

<p><b>1. Say AND not OR!</b> Is your solution integrative?</p> 	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Check if your thinking breaks any of the rules... What do you need to change about your solution?</p>	<p><b>7. CHUNK IT OR JUNK IT!'</b> Have you reduced the scope to de-risk your solution appropriately?</p> 
<p><b>2. Assume Fair=Different not Fair=Equal</b> Does your solution recognise the need to tailor actions to meet different populations/needs?</p> 		<p><b>8. ALL CONSTRAINTS INTO MEAT SPACE</b> Have you ensured that your solution appropriately uses new technologies?</p> 
<p><b>3. Change DEPENDENCE to INTERDEPENDENCE</b> Is your solution capable of self governance?</p> 		<p><b>9. Unlearn EVERYTHING!</b> Have you ensured that your solution appropriately uses new knowledge?</p> 
<p><b>4. Do NOTHING of NO use!</b> Is your solution designed to ensure focus on delivering to your goal of making money/delivering societal benefit)?</p> 		<p><b>10. Don't change anything!</b> Have you taken into account the overall impact of change on your ability to deliver results?</p> 
<p><b>5. Stakeholders rule OK!</b> Is your solution designed around the people who have to deliver it and live with the results?</p> 		<p><b>11. LOOP IT UP!</b> Is your solution self-sustaining?</p> 
<p><b>6. Make time fit!</b> To what extent have you made or scoped your solution to the possible rather than the 'nice to have' impossible?</p> 		<p><b>12. Go VIRTUAL!</b> Have you developed a solution with powerful results which relies on an approach which is not popularly adopted?</p> 

*Rational Thinking for our Fast-Changing, Ambiguous Digital World*

SOURCE BOOK/PUBLICATION: *Rules for the New World* Eddie Obeng Wiley Books



Figure 20.12 12 Rules | New World Thinking

12 Rules to ensure our thinking is going to match the reality of the current business world (Figure 20.12).

## **REFERENCE**

[THE END OF THE BEGINING]

---

## OBENG'S LAWS OF CHANGE

Looking back a thousand years from now, historians will recognise that the late 20th century was the first time that the **pace of change** outstripped the **rate of learning** on a global scale. For those of us who are alive now, change at such a terrifying rate demands we learn how to cope with it, perhaps thrive.

The reasons for this dizzying pace are now understood - **innovation, connectedness**, the pervasiveness of **cyberspace**. In this New World of Change though, there are some constants - one is change. Through practice and research I have discovered seven 'laws' which, if understood and applied to your thinking and behaviour, make it much easier to cope with, steer and occasionally manage change. Ignoring these laws makes failure a surprise and success elusive.

---

### *Change is the seed and fruit of itself.*

Business strategies or tactics that fail to take into account the first law usually start off looking successful and then degenerate into failure.

As a leader or manager, try to anticipate the additional 'knock-on' effects of any change you start. Think through the chain of events to the end. For example, an e-mail to all staff in an organisation of 1200 people that takes 30

seconds to open will consume 10 hours of resource, costing about £1000.

If your business has a margin of 10% the net result of you pressing the 'send' button is that someone will have to make an additional £10,000 sales quickly just to stay in the same place. They may put pressure on long standing customer relations to achieve a quick result. This will probably affect customer and brand positions. Was this what you were planning?

## The 1st Law: One change leads to another

---

### *End before starting - Sometimes abandoning change = Success*

Organisations are very fond of starting to implement new initiatives and strategies whilst old ones are still not complete. They will happily move a manager from one active role to another without much thought of the implications. Asking anyone at the receiving end, you

will easily discover that the resulting confusion often cancels out any advantage that would have been gained. Always use 'endings' - any ritual or statement is better than none. Close or kill a major set of activities before opening another.

## The 2nd Law: Adding change to change creates 'chaos'

---

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***Remember the fundamental 'design' of human beings.***

Imagine millions of years ago, your ancestors in the primeval forest suddenly startled by a noise. What did they do? A. Think logically about the problem? B. Start to run as fast as they could? Guess what happened to the ones who chose A? They're dead, extinct. You are here, reading this, because your ancestors chose B. Your design is: Any change I observe is a potential threat to my security. This gives rise to an emotional response (usually fear, with adrenaline) and then later, when you feel safe, the logic circuits start up in your brain.

Ever met someone who has had an idea? However terrible everyone else thinks it is, they stick to it - they even call it 'my baby'. When people invent ideas for

change, they often become obsessed and unstoppable in wanting the change to succeed. Create situations where people **invent** and **create** their own change - avoid forcing change on people, it makes them resistant.

\*A personal hint to make sure that you can deal with change better: Spend all your free time thinking about impossible things that do not already exist or happen in your organisation - 'What if we were half the size or twice the size?' 'What if we merged with our key competitors?' 'What if we sold our plant and leased it back?' You will then have invented future change in your own mind and then when it happens, you will be able to avoid an emotional reaction.

---

**The 3rd Law: People create change - people constrain change**

---

***Chunk it or junk it.***

Choose changes that give benefits. In a business, only select change where there is a good chance that you will make more money. Good ideas, in the long run, may not allow you to survive. Break up the change and benefits into smaller pieces or projects. A grand project to install a computerised purchasing system becomes five smaller projects, each with a smaller spend and earlier inflows of cash. Think about service stations. Old World: build all

units-petrol station, shops, motel and open. New World: build petrol station first, use the revenue to build the shop and eventually the motel. This way your cash flow profile looks more like a 'w' than a large deep 'V' and your exposure to the risks of your project going wrong and the risks that external events will alter the need for your project, are greatly reduced.

---

**The 4th Law: Accomplished change is change chosen and carried out carefully**

---

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*“First we shape our organisations <buildings>, thereafter they shape us.”*

The longer people have worked in a particular way, the harder it is for them to accept change. If you require easy or quick results, start with people who are least entrenched in their ways. If you can find one who is

entrenched use them as the example of change however small it is. If you must fight a long history, make sure that it is worth the battle.

### **The 5th Law: The challenge of creating change is the converse of the accumulated complacency**

---

*Sometimes you must go backwards to go forwards.*

You want to create a flexible web-based business. You may have to invent new processes that instead of digitising, you first run with paper-based systems to get

buy-in before digitising. A single step to in change is often just too much change and people may secretly continue with their favourite, old process.

### **The 6th Law: Resistance to change accumulates over time and the cumulative need for change can't be carried out all at once**

---

*Pagoda's survive earthquakes.*

Rigid structures do not cope well with change, but by loose coupling of elements of the business, networking the people, having few but clear lines of accountability in the organisation or by the linking of only a few, key

suppliers or customers, the complexity and unpredictability of the New World can be dramatically reduced.

### **The 7th Law: Sparsely coupling change creates calm**

---

“Problems are diverse and inexhaustible, the opportunities for change are infinite. At the same time an individual's ability is bounded and has an end; there is certainly a limit to what you can do.”

“If you try to range over infinite change, opportunities and problems with limited resources and ability, your judgement will be biased and your spirit will end up exhausted.”

Remember the **Laws of Change** at all times and use them to **Thrive** in our **New World of Change**.

---

## How Do I?



Performance Enhancement Tools

People Engagement Tools

Productivity Effectiveness Tools

Problem Elimination Tools

Possibility Exploration Tools



PROSPECTING BACK & FORTH



Every PET has a QwikGuide saying **What** it is. **Why** you need it. **When** to use it. And **How** to use it.

To find a **QwikGuide** for any PET the format is <https://QUBE.cc/PETs/<Name-of-the-PET>> or use the QR code.

The framework themes for the three topics are listed below:

### Project/Change Management

Purpose & Project Type  
Stakeholder Management  
Plan, Coordinate Preliminate  
Learn & Review  
Lead & Manage Team

### Perfect Projects

Purpose Index  
Performance Indicators  
Perspectives & Incidents  
Practitioner Insight  
Prospecting Back & Forth

### Transform beyond Change

Gestate  
Crawl  
Scaffold  
Emerge  
Fly

## Project/Change Management PETs

### Purpose & Project Type

Key Questions:

- Why MUST we undertake this change?*
- Will the effort and risk be worth the benefits and outcomes?*
- Do we know what we are aiming to achieve?*
- Do we know how we are to deliver the outcome?*
- How complex is the web of people?*
- How easy will it be to see if we are winning?*

### Stakeholder Management

Key Questions:

- Who needs this?*
- How do we find out what exactly they want?*
- Who do we need to support us?*
- Who will work to stop us?*
- Who do we need to bet on our success?*
- How do we get them on board?*
- How do we get them aligned with the goals and vision?*
- How do we get them to pay for the effort?*
- How do we resolve skirmishes?*

### Plan, Coordinate Preliminate

Key Questions:

- How do we work out what needs to be done by whom when?*
- How do we prevent stuff from going wrong?*
- How do we ensure we have all the resources we need?*
- How do we make sure we everyone knows what they need to know in order to play their part?*
- How do we get past dilemmas and crossroads?*
- How do we keep things on track/ get them back on track?*

Description	PET	Page
Reason for Change	GapLeap	102
Root causes/Whole Problem	BubbleDiagram	133
Value-At-Stake/ Benefits	GapLeap	102
Best Project Approach	ChangeTypes	106
Change Overview	Obeng Space Cube	112
All the pieces	Jigsaw	116
Set Scale of Risk	ChunkIt	174
Future Proof	FutureMap	278
Money Making Machine	MMM-Rates	96
Identify Key People	StakeholderGrid1	141
Engage Key People	StakeholderGrid2	142
Manage Risky People	StakeholderGrid3	143
Benefits From Hard Criteria	BenefitsBabelFish	144
Prioritise	FastGoodCheap	153
Align/Ground rules	Hopes&Fears	159
Secure Budget	GapLeap	102
Resolve Conflict	HardPlaceRock	157
Manage Expectations	AnxietyGap	166
Make sure they know you listened	PlayBak	165
Coordinating information	Stakeholder Comms	167
Craft effective messages	Stakeholder Messages	167
Buy-in   Nuclear option	IDQB	167
Identify Risk/Preliminate	Fix-It-Now	186
De-Risk Resource	Stakeholder Grid 4	144
Plan - Gain Perspective/ Schedule	StickySteps	181
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Make Fast & Good Decisions	ISWON	189
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Who does what?	RAPID	240
Best methodology	JigSaw Paint-by Nos	170
Best methodology	JigSaw Lost-in-Fog	171
Best methodology	JigSaw Go-on-Quest	172
Best methodology	JigSaw Make-a-Movie	173
Chunk of change scale	ChunkIt	174
Critical Blockers	Unsackabl	185

\* Black - PET in this edition    Grey – not in this edition

## Lead & Manage Team

### Key Questions:

- How should I change to Lead Change?*
- How do I influence people more powerful and senior?*
- Who shall I try to get into my team?*
- How do I turn a bunch of people into a super team, fast?*
- How do I make sure everyone is motivated and contributing what they want to?*
- How do I fill gaps and remove people risks?*
- How do I manage external contributors?*
- How do I get the best out of everyone?*

Leadership Preference	SquarePeg	198
Build Teams Fast	CircleOfInclusion	214
Select Best Team	TeamFit	196
Manage	SaddleUp	
Contractors/Consultants		
Using Team effectively	TeamFit	208
Improve Performance	CO.A.C.H	
Lead effectively	BEAT Paint-by-Nos	202
Lead effectively	BEAT Quest	203
Lead effectively	BEAT Fog	204
Lead effectively	BEAT Movie	205
Organisation-wide	Project OrganoWeb	307
Accountabilities and Responsibilities		

## Learn & Review

### Key Questions:

- How do I discover what I need to know but don't know?*
- How do I ensure I keep growing and learning alongside the challenges I face?*
- How do I ensure that I learn, fast, what the stakeholders need to let me know?*
- How do I keep a critical eye on how things are going so I can course correct?*
- How do I understand and see if all the effort we are putting in is delivering the benefits we want?*
- How do I make sure we are emotionally great (happy, energised, motivated) and that we are delivering well (chunks, milestones, benefits)?*

PjM Learning Needs	JIT HealthCheck	260
Fix Learning Deficiency	Learning Style Quiz	124
Clarity to Stakeholder	5Ps	191
Agree/Communicate Scope	Stakeholder Messages	167
Ensure Activity	RAPID	240
Fast Exploratory Review	Here2There	135
Manage Change	JigSaw	117
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Check your message is Understood	ImplikationsQuestions	193
Collaborative learning	LearnBySharing	240
Preview & Review	2-4-6-8Communicate	248

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## Perfect Projects

### Purpose Index

Key Questions:  
 What does it solve/benefit us?  
 What are the clear improvements we seek?  
 Where does the project fit into the organisation's activities?  
 Who is affected cradle to grave?  
 How are people affected?  
 How to ensure we hear everyone?

### Performance Indicators

Key Questions:  
*How do we ensure we are measuring the impact of the project manager?*  
*How do we avoid rewarding poor project behaviour?*  
*How do we know if we are making the right progress?*  
*How do we ensure we have set up metrics for the journey, not just the deliverables?*

### Perspectives & Incidents

Key Questions:  
*How do we focus on staying ahead of the project concept as it becomes real?*  
*How do we catch up if we fall behind?*  
*How do we get the budget back on track if we overspend?*  
*How do we manage external dependencies?*  
*How do we ensure deliverables are still relevant in the future when delivered?*

Description	PET	Page
Summarising change within the organisation	Integrated Change Management	220
Find all those who matter	Dead Body Syndrome Stakeholder Universe	
Identify Enablers and Detractors	StakeholderGrid1	246
Be clear improvements	GapLeap	247
Include everyone verbally	SpinCasting	
Coordinate from Strategy to Execution and back	HourGlassManager	247
Select the best metrics	OnBa-I-ance	249
Create baseline performance for Project manager	GlydePath	255
Accountability for Owner/Sponsor	Project Owner Promises	251
Anticipating issues	CrystalGaze	115
360 view of Change Challenge	Obeng Space Cube	253
Discipline and coordination	DrumBeat	
Identify & fix obvious blocks in advance	GlydePath	255
Scale the effort to give the easiest fastest	ChunkIt	174
Recovering financial deviation	BudgetRevers	
Recovering lateness	TimeRevers	195
Ensuring the future emerges for you	FutureMapping	278
Refocus communication	2-4-6-8Communicate	248

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## Practitioner Insight

### Key Questions:

*How do we apply the Art of Project management fully?  
How do we fix the holes in our capability and pre-empt risk?*

Identify and Fix Capability Holes	JIT HealthCheck	260
Overview of basics of All Change	Project Success Map	260
Link Type-Leadership – Method and People	JigSaw	117

## Prospecting Back & Forth

### Key Questions:

*How do we ensure the alignment and engagement of stakeholders in day-to-day activities decision making and looking ahead?  
What must we do to influence and control the future?  
How do we pull in still relevant nuggets from the past?  
How do we embed benefits in the organisation as early as possible?  
How do we ensure stakeholders have a high level of trust in us to prevent 'double-checking', excess reporting and 'secret-squirrel' parallel 'just-in-case-they-fail' activities?*

Thorough review	ActionReplay	263
Mapping a complete problem	BlowingBubbles	264
Digging deeper	RatHoling	
Building performance in others	CO.A.C.H.	
Focus on the future	FutureMapping-Cones	275
Ensuring the impact of your project in future	FutureMapping	278
Selecting communications	SeeHearFeel	268
Cultural elements to Action	EsKeyMo	284
Future Focussed Drumbeats	2-4-6-8Communicate	248
Build Trust - Fast!	BlyndTrussed	

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## Transform beyond Change

### Overview

The overall journey of Transformation	PETnav   Transform	298
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### Gestate

#### Key Questions:

- Where are we now?*
- Are we transforming to **Move-Away-From** or **Move-Towards**? Any Clues?*
- How do we ensure enough **resource** to carry us through the transformation?*
- What type of change is expected? How do we pre-eliminate?*

Description	PET	Page
Understand the status quo	BlowingBubbles	133
Clarify customer-centricity	CustomerKing	
Transformation is needed	TypesOfChange	106
How to lead effectively	LeadingAllChange	201
Identify Leadership gaps	Leadership-BEAT	201
Check money sustainability	MMM-Rates	97
Check you are <u>really</u> transforming	MetaMorph	290
Communicating novel concepts	eXampleOint	291

### Crawl

#### Key Questions:

- Why are **Winning** today? Why will we **Win** in future?*
- What is the **problem/ opportunity** landscape?*
- What are the **MUSTS** we see for the **Emerging** situation?*

Outline the scope	5Ps	191
Ensure best future alignment	StrawberryFish	
Use innovator insights	ObNox	303
Focus on inevitable actions	FutureMapping-Cones	275
Flexible New World Organisation	OrganoWeb	307
Specialised New World Changes	EDD-Transformation	303
Base rules for world success	12 Rules	304
Agreeing a range of outcomes	Bulls-i	305

### Scaffold

#### Key Questions:

- What must we **Maintain**? What existing barriers can we fix at the same time?*
- What must we **Stop** now to protect the future from unexpected consequences?*
- What must we **Start** trying, learning sand-pitting?*

Create a plan of uncertainty	StickySteps	181
Keep the best- Junk the rest	2StepsForward	182
Check Theory works in Practice	KrashTest	
Avoid unintended consequences	FutureMapping	278
Preliminate uncertainty	FixItNow	186
Using QUBE to make transformation easy	Nteract-Culture	307

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## Emerge

Key Questions:

*What are the **deliverables**?*

*How will we check the deliverables with the **stakeholders***

*How will we convert Project/Programme into*

***Process/Culture***

Measure progresses	OnBa-l-ance	249
Ensure aligned understanding	ImpliKationsQuestion	192
Shift personal behaviour	Habitz	
Shift Group culture	EsKeyMo	284

## Fly

Key Questions:

*What additional projects do we need?*

*How do we **bed-in** the new activities/behaviours*

*How do we **fine-tune** to success?*

Create the legend	LearnBySharing	240
Check money sustainability	MMM-Rates	96
Celebrate personal growth	Land-A-Log	
Ensure customer alignment	StrawberryFish	
Clarify customer-centricity	CustomerKing	
Change Checklist	A.N.T.S.	311

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## WHAT PEOPLE SAY...

HOW THE FIRST EDITION CHANGED LIVES AND BOOSTED CAREERS.  
WHAT WILL YOU WRITE ABOUT THIS EDITION CHANGE YOURS?



*"The most learning I had without realising it; this is the power of All Change! With a large helping of humour, Eddie imparts his immense and practical wisdom through skilfully told stories that I instantly relate to.*

*This revised edition is a must-read guidebook for anyone seeking to successfully navigate today's ever-accelerating world."*

**Harvey Wade  
Innovate 21**

*"The world needs the updated "All Change!". All my favourites are in there - no POINT I see... I'm using that tomorrow for a project retro (it's soo flexible) and I used Red Ant Man last month to figure out what to do next."*

**Colin Burns  
Senior Director Apple**

*"If you believe that change projects are all about the process, DO NOT READ THIS BOOK; - it will seriously damage your health.*

*Like Eddie, this book is a timeless classic; - read it if you want your projects to rock!*

*Updated and refined- but enough about Eddie- the book is great too!"*

**Stephen Carver  
Cranfield School of Management**

*"It's a radical book, Eddie. Really distinct from pretty much every book on the topics of change and projects. I'm sure the time is now for that kind of radicalism though."*

**Perry Timms  
People & Transformational HR**



I used to work in the National Health Service in the UK. If ever an organization needed transforming that one did!

My role? Head of Innovation. I had no remit, not target area and a tiny budget. What to do?

Then Eddie came to do a leadership course and the rest, as they say, is history. He blew me away with his World After Midnight model. How I laughed when some of my colleagues complained the video was too fast paced to take in all the information in it. How I despaired when others clamoured to find out about a tool he used called Papershow but showed no interest in this amazing 4D virtual avatar learning and doing environment called QUBE.

I went home and ordered a bunch of his books and was hooked. All Change! literally changed my world over night. And I don't use that term lightly.

Three days later I was chatting to Eddie on QUBE.

Three weeks later I gathered a disparate team to work with me on QUBE, where All Change! Came to life in front of our eyes and helped us navigate the foggy world of innovation.

Three months later and we were all about All Change! Virtual training courses and events for maximum impact, long before virtual working was the norm. Projects and programmes were suddenly visible, fast paced, truly collaborative and focused on outcome. Teams were visibly both learning how to work in a different way and having fun while doing so. The way we worked, the culture of work, changed almost overnight. Suddenly we were delivering more than ever but still had time for learning and fun. The only downside was getting told off quite a bit by my boss because we were so good at pre-eliminating risks my risk register was seen as too 'light' by the PMO.

Two years later I felt I had achieved what Eddie challenged me to achieve in my small bit of the health service. I jumped ship, joined the QUBE team and ventured out to spread the All Change! word via QUBE.

Four years later and I used all my tales of 'smart failure' and learning from Eddie and All Change! while working in the NHS into the 'choose your own adventure' book the Change Ninja Handbook and developed the Ninja Dojo on QUBE.

I still get confused when I share this amazing model, these amazing Performance Enhancement Tools (PETs) and people say, 'oh I have a tool like that too'. They don't. Their tools might have some of the same words, their process might have some of the same terminology, but I have never seen anything anywhere near as good for almost risk free, productive projects that are a joy to work on from start to finish.

If you haven't read All Change yet get a copy now. The 2.0 version is even better!

Tammy Watchorn, The Change Ninja



*“Eddie’s books have always been go-to references on my project management bookshelves. He has a unique ability to simultaneously educate and entertain.*

*His long-awaited update to the best-selling All Change! does not disappoint and will take its place among the project management classics.”*

**Adrian Dooley**

**Honorary Fellow of the Association For Project Management - Praxis Network**



**Matt Marsh**

Creative Director People-Shaped Innovator | Change Maker | Transformation Catalyst | Judge Business School lecturer | Author | TEDx Speaker | Neol

Not only is Eddie Obeng the real deal, he’s also the original deal. Always ahead of the curve, Eddie has an unbelievable way of explaining complex concepts, simply and clearly.

He’s unique, charming and compelling style brings clarity to the murky challenges associated with change.

Not only do I draw on the frameworks he has created constantly, I’ve found his wisdom and experience to be invaluable.



“Transformation has become a daily challenge, and the “old” methods to manage change through steps have stopped working.

Since I met Eddie to train Danone executives, his stories & simple approaches to address complex challenges have stuck in our memories – a sign of transformational learning!

Definitely transformation is an art – not a rational exercise – and Eddie is offering essential ingredients to practice it : inspiration, ways to connect minds & hearts, and tools to act upon the future “with & through people”, in an agile and fun way”

**Thierry Bonetto**

Founder & Senior Advisor



*“Eddie has always served the subject, not himself. Independent, considered, untarnished truths. He is everything we should be. Resilient, challenging and supportive.”*

**Steve Wake**

**Chairman Projects Programmes Portfolios British Standards Institution**

*“I smiled as I read All Change! I smiled at the easy conversation between the protagonists, and I smiled at how Eddie’s insights, experiences, and advice are even more relevant and applicable now.*

*Eddie sums up perfectly the challenges all organisations now face: ‘The day job has become the change job’, and when confronted with omnipresent change, the need to successfully manage projects has never been greater. The need for All Change! has never been greater.!”*

**Dr Ian Clarkson Director QA**

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## EDDIE OBENG'S NEW WORLD™ BOOK SERIES

~~All Change! The Project Leader's Secret Handbook~~

All Change! The Secret Art of Transformation, Perfect Project and Change Management

*EDDIE OBENG*

Eddie Obeng's Money Making Machine

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Making Re-engineering Happen

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